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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to help school administrators look seriously at one of the biggest school problems--discipline. The author examines those factors that seem to cause student misbehavior--factors having their origin in both the home and the school. Believing that the best way to handle discipline problems is through prevention rather than remediation, the author does not discuss punishment such as suspension or expulsion. Instead, he offers 40 preventative prescriptions to help keep discipline problems from becoming so overwhelming that productivity and satisfaction is impossible. These prescriptions fall into three categories: logistics/materials, processes, and programs. The author emphasizes the importance of parent education and participation in solving discipline problems. Descriptions of successful discipline improvement programs in various elementary and secondary schools are included. (Author/DS)

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DISCIPLINE . . . #1 PROBLEM IN THE SCHOOLS?

40 Positive, Preventive Prescriptions For Those Who Care . . . .

EA 010 034

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, APRIL 1977

DISCIPLINE...#1 PROBLEM IN THE SCHOOLS?

40 Positive, Preventative Prescriptions for Those Who Care....

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There is much educational research to indicate that the self-concept is the primary determiner of behavior. If a student is labeled a failure, in school or elsewhere, and treated subsequently like a failure, the self-concept will become damaged and the student will have behavioral problems. Positive teacher involvement will help increase the self-concept of the majority of the students and can, in many cases, be the cause of positive behavioral changes.

James Piatt, Principal
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DISCIPLINE...#1 PROBLEM IN THE SCHOOLS?

Background on the Issue

There is increasing concern in our educational institutions regarding student conduct, or perhaps I should say, "Misconduct." This concern, indeed, is not limited to educators. Over the last five years, the Gallup Poll has listed discipline as the #1 problem in schools. Certainly, without a safe learning environment it is difficult, if not impossible, to offer a positive climate for productivity and satisfaction.

Although everyone agrees there is a problem, this doesn't necessarily mean all people perceive the problem in the same way. Some parents, for instance, (parents and administrators have met at one time or another) think of the problem in these ways:

- Someone needs to do something with these kids (including mine) because I can't do anything at home.
- There must be stronger discipline measures in the school--but for the other children, not for my little darlin'.
- The school doesn't seem to be able to do anything about the problems so I'm going to teach my child to stand up on his/her own two feet and to learn how to punch-it-out.

Educators, however, are more likely to perceive discipline concerns from a different point of view:

- How can anyone expect me to teach in this classroom; I can't keep order long enough to teach anything.
- Discipline isn't my problem; I'm here to teach a subject, and besides, the vice-principal is getting paid to deal with these unacceptable actions.
- Don't those parents care how their children act? How can I teach anything if the parents don't care?

There is some strong evidence unfortunately that some parents (not to mention labor unions, etc.) feel schools should be glorified babysitting agencies. Educators object to this position. Probably no one believes schools, solely, should wage the fight against crime and violence. Fortunately, most parents and educators see school as a place for learning: to learn, a safe environment for students and staff must be maintained. But how?

Educators seem to be facing an uphill battle. A study reported in Olivero's Chicken Little Was Right...Or The Future Of Education Is Now! noted recent National Education Association statistics on the magnitude of violence and vandalism in our schools. The report, in part, stated:

- in-school assault and battery has increased 58% since 1970
- school robberies have increased 117%
- sex offenses in school have risen 62%
- drug problems (including alcohol) have gone up 81%
- 63,000 U.S. teachers were attacked physically during the 1973-74 school year.
- 239,400 teachers reported personal property maliciously damaged.

These data are shocking--the magnitude simply isn't known by most people; or else people really don't care.

The Los Angeles Unified School District has tried to keep tabs on discipline problems faced in their schools and doing an excellent job on a difficult task--especially considering how large the district is. (Their ability to get the job done, by the way, also suggests other districts could do the same if they really decided to so do.) Over the past few years the Los Angeles data seem to indicate a gradual decline in the number of conflicts between students. What is alarming, however, is the rapid increase in the number of attacks on teachers and administrators. Is it any wonder some teachers and administrators have a "true" fear about going to their jobs?

Somehow statistics are impersonal--case studies certainly aren't. One can remember the time when Dick West, outstanding principal in Seattle, was trying to quell a disturbance in the cafeteria and was hit both with a flying textbook and a chair. Or the athletic director in San Francisco who was hit with a bottle during one of the interscholastic events in the City. Or the individual teacher who was raped by three young people while the teacher was working late at school. Nearly every educator is familiar with similar situations.

When crises occur in our schools, attempts are generally made to meet the hassles straight-on. When we realized children coming to school hungry had a hard time learning, we made efforts to offer special food programs. When non-English speaking children were getting a fast-shuffle, efforts were made to offer bilingual and bicultural programs. When gifted students were being ignored, attention was given to the matter. For one reason or another discipline issues, for the most part, have been ignored or overlooked--or people have thought the problem would go away. Avoidance behavior is no way to solve the problem.

A few people are beginning to speak out--realizing that in a democratic society people need to behave responsibly; that with freedom there is a legitimate amount of structure required; that people working together can accomplish a great deal. Real problems exist when there are weak links in the chain.

One example of speaking out--on the general issue of crime and violence came recently in San Francisco when Mayor Moscone called a special session to talk with neighbors in different community areas about "getting involved."

It's much easier to keep out of controversy--getting involved means people will have to act. There's a chance crime on the streets in San Francisco will be reduced substantially if the rhetoric of the Mayor's meeting changes into positive action.

School people are also beginning to be heard. The following paragraphs are taken directly from the Riverside Press newspaper of December 20, 1976. I believe the article reflects some of the current thinking of administrators in many schools.

PARENTS ASKED TO HELP CURB STUDENT FIGHTING

Leon Shockley, principal of Mountain View Elementary School, has appealed to parents for help in reducing "violent-type confrontations" among Mountain View students.

"An alarming number children," Shockley said in a letter to parents, "lack problem-solving skills beyond the level of fighting, rock-throwing and hitting others with objects. It would appear that such behavior is a learned and perhaps a taught attitude."

Shockley, 45, a teacher and principal in Riverside Unified School District since 1959, said aggressiveness and violence among elementary school students is increasing. He blames the influence of violent movies, violent television shows, and parents who teach children to solve problems "by fighting and hitting."

Alayne Yates, assistant professor of pediatrics and child psychiatry at Loma Linda University Medical School, said increasing violence and "unsocialized aggression" among the children is a nationwide phenomenon. She said that while this is far from clearly understood, researchers believe school children are less mature and less able to control their emotions than in previous generations.

"It's no wonder schools everywhere are having difficulty coping with these children," said Yates, who has worked with county school children.

According to Shockley, "We're getting primary kids who are very street-savvy, tough-minded little kids, very self-assured in any confrontation with authority."

"In any kind of threatening situation, they have pronounced reluctance to back down. It's a severe adversary kind of response, and it's a growing trend."

Shockley is by no means the only principal worried about violence among students. For example, principals in both the city's unified districts--Alvord and Riverside--generally agree violence is increasing and that co-operation is needed between parents and their schools.

Hawthorne Elementary principal Jack Nelson, 54, a district principal since 1953, said he is "noticing more and more (violence) among younger children.

It often begins as play-acting from what they've seen on television."

A lot of kids are taking karate lessons...Kids are going to get attention some way. If they don't get it through school work, they'll get it by going on the playground and belting a kid in the mouth.

Dolores Luhrs, 45, principal at Longfellow Elementary, has banned "play-fighting" where students pretend to land blows on each other's body.

Although they admit the problem is getting worse, city principals still say school violence is largely caused by a small percentage of students. Riverside Superintendent Ray Berry said the "bulk of the severe discipline problems in the district involves about 2 percent of students."

"It may seem like we're talking about a lot of children," said Jefferson Elementary principal William Nichols, 43, "but they end up being the same names over and over again. You try to work with parents, but sometimes you don't make a lot of headway."

The principals say some parents condone and even encourage violence among their children. School district policy basically says self-defense is permissible but aggression and retaliation are not.

"I ask kids why they fight," said Nelson, "and a lot will say 'my dad says it's okay to hit someone if they hit me first.' Of course, these kids can usually work it around so the other person hits them first. I say 'fine, when you're at home, you follow dad's rules. When you're at school, buddy, you follow my rules.'"

Shockley, principal at Emerson Elementary for 10 years before becoming principal at Mountain View last July, said parents often "brag about" telling their children to strike back.

"I have a sinking feeling when I hear that," Shockley said, "I know that instructions like that are going to be destructive to that child."

No evidence exists that Mountain View students are more violent or aggressive than other students. Evidence does exist that Shockley is possibly making more of an effort to reduce violence than other principals. In his first five months as principal at Mountain View, Shockley has:

- Sent an open letter to parents, warning about the possible destructive influence of television.

  "In the real world," Shockley's letter said, "most people who only know how to respond violently to problems end up dead or in jail."

- Added an administrative staff member to handle discipline problems and deal with parents--Doug Smith, 29, former Mountain View teacher who spent the last two years dealing with problem students at Chemawa Middle School.

  Smith visits the homes of students involved in skirmishes. "In the first month of school," Smith said, "it was well into the evening, 7 o'clock or so, before I finished talking to parents of children who had been beaten up or beaten someone else up on the way home."

- Instructed teachers to discuss with students the shortcomings of violence.
  For example, a Shockley memo of late November asked teachers to "keep pushing at every opportunity the notion that violent means (are) the least satisfactory method of problem solving. After all the hitting, hurting and bleeding, the mind, words and reason must be used."
- Explored the idea of seeking help from the STRIDE program--Service Training and Research in Desegregated Education--paid for by the U.S. Office of Education.

  The STRIDE program conducts workshops for parents and teachers on student violence and "behavior modification" and is not confined to racially-motivated violence. Shockley would like STRIDE involved at Mountain View by next spring.

Even without STRIDE Shockley thinks progress has been made toward reducing violence at Mountain View. So does LaDanta Harriman, an officer in the Parent-Teacher Association at Mountain View.

"We thought at one time about moving the kids from the school," Harriman said. "Now you couldn't get us out. The administration is trying. They admit things need to be improved and they're doing it."

There are some fascinating points in the article that are worth considering further. For instance, the principal believes something can be done about the negative influences in the school. Indeed they can. One shcool I visited five or six years ago in Seattle was one of the most difficult high schools I had ever seen. On the day I was on campus students were burning a police car in the student parking lot. To make a long story short, the principal, school staff, parents, and interested students took on the challenge. In a five year period they had made so much progress they found it no longer necessary to hire security police for their evening athletic events. By anyone's criteria the school had made considerable progress over a period of five years. (I'll talk more about how they managed to make the change later in this paper.)

On another occasion I was working in Los Angeles with members of the organization called COBA (Council of Black Administrators). Members of this group were very concerned about the high degree of violence in the schools and the number of middle-school youngsters bringing "zip" guns to school. In one school, orientation at the beginning of the year dealt more with the identification of the zip gun components than it did with the new reading program they were installing. (Keen state of affairs.) With COBA's diligent effort--including going on public television in Los Angeles--involved people were able to reduce significantly the difficulty.

Another school in Nebraska had real problems in the cafeteria. Even though things seemed to go reasonable well in other areas of the school, the world came unglued when many students were corralled together during lunch periods. An all-school effort was directed at the lunchroom fiasco, and the "good-folks" won. The point is, problems can be overcome when people work together.

A second interesting part of the Press article calls for the school and the home to get their acts together. Having been in numerous schools the past decade, I've been amazed at the number of parent (often meeting with prin-

cipals during conferencing time following a suspension for fighting) who have indicated they teach their children to fight. "I don't want my son to be a sissy. I want him to stand up and fight for what he thinks is right." That statement is beginning to sound like a broken record. This kind of home influence may be more potent today than ever in the past. Unfortunately there may be so much violence in the public generally people are beginning to believe the only way to deal with the issue is to be stronger and more combative than the other person.

Not only is this influence common among young boys, but the same seems to be true among girls and young women. Many sociological studies point out the increasing incidences of girls and women being involved in violent acts. Whatever the reasons for this (some people attribute it--I believe erroneously--to the women's liberation movement), there is little doubt women are more likely to be involved in disciplinary cases today than in past years. While educators may have known what to do with some unruly young men, they seem to be at a loss when working with the opposite sex.

Neither parents nor staff can attack the problem of discipline independently and be effective--both parties must team with students to establish and maintain a positive learning climate. This climate is characterized by firm, fair, and consistent approaches to discipline matters.

A third point of interest about the article is worthy of mention. A principal actually had the fortitude (guts) to let parents know what was happening; further he sought their support. One might imagine there were numerous "letters to the editor" following the principals's plea. Indeed there were many letters disclaiming what he had to say. (That's one of the gambles people have to take if they are willing to get involved--and willing to get other people to join with them on a job that needs to be done. Too often, I'm afraid, we as educators are unwilling or unable to level with parents and other people in the community, and, therefore, lose credibility with them. Being straight-forward with what is working and with what isn't working is sensible.) The vast majority of the responses, though, were very supportive.

A fourth intriguing point, perhaps not all that obvious from the article, has to do with the location of the school district. Many people used to believe most discipline concerns were centered in the urban areas; for the most part their assumption was correct. No longer is this true. Reports of violence in rural and suburban areas, away from the sprawl of the megapolis, are being reported with increasing regularity. Riverside is not what one would call the basic urban setting. The problem can't be ducked anywhere any more.

The article contains other points administrators could spend time thinking about; I've tried to highlight just a few.

Polarization

Two opposite poles of action are recommended frequently to overcome discipline difficulties. One pole of thought suggests getting "tougher." This approach

comes from the group calling for strong corporal punishment in the schools (the chorus of "back to the basics" usually echoes in the background). Clearly, strong punishment tends to extinguish negative behavior (at least temporarily) in rats. Is it possible the same action applicable to people? The other pole of thought calls for a more open, anything goes arrangement; something similar to the Summerhill Plan. There are those who have bought each of these approaches and have evidence to demonstrate they work. I doubt either pole would work for me--furthermore I'm doubtful either pole is particularly applicable for the vast majority of school districts and individual schools where I've had the privilege of working. If one does buy into either of these approaches, it's probably a good idea to stop reading at this point--these folks aren't going to find much in the following pages to support their position. This book is devoted to those concerned about positive, preventative action.

Prevention Vs. Remediation

Obviously, administrators can't turn total attention to the prevention of discipline problems when there are day-to-day crises. What is needed is a maintenance program for resolving issues as they arise while setting aside critical time and resources for planned, prevention interventions. If the latter is to occur, administrators and parents (along with the students) need to look at causes (as opposed to effects) and to plan interventions accordingly.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CAUSES?

Causes of discipline problems are many and varied; they often have psychological, sociological, economical origins. Without getting too heavy, and at the calculated risk of oversimplifying the causal factors, the underlying stimuli are lumped under two headings:

Factors Related to Home

- Increased incidence of child abuse.
- Reduced psychological support from the home.
- Conflict between school and home philosophies.
- Increased negativism about school and/or authority generally.

Factors Related to School

- Ill-defined school purposes.
- Inadequate communication channels.
- Centralized decision-making.
- Inadequate curricula.
- Staff fears.
- Stress in the schools.

The Home

- Child Abuse...In the past few years I've had the good fortune of working with a few staff members who invest a considerable portion of their time and energies in the Children's Trauma Center at the Oakland Hospital. These experiences have caused me to be shocked at the incidences of child abuse--specific cases of abuse are being recorded at an astonishing rate.

Probably more astonishing, though, are the numbers of cases going undetected, unreported. So what does this have to do with schools? More specifically, what does child abuse have to do with school discipline?

Studies have shown that abused children learn through conditioning to deal with problems the same way they were dealt with; that is, if children are banged on at home, their immediate response to pressure is to bang on someone else. Educators must be alert to students who have been abused; both the students and the parents need professional assistance from qualified people. Although incidence of child abuse are most frequently found in urban areas, perhaps an equally obtrusive problem is that of child neglect.

Child neglect is more often found in suburban communities. Parents of neglected children are apparently so busy with their jobs or pursuits of social issues, they frequently fail to provide those safe and comfortable environments so important to the growing child. The child who believes s/he is low person on the totem pole has a hard time feeling positive about self; a negative self-image often causes a variety of acting--out behaviors. Trying to decide whether abuse or neglect is most critical may offer an interesting academic discussion; the fact is, both are harmful and need to be attended.

Whatever the cause (abuse or neglect) thoughtful administrators will learn what to look for, will share this information with the staff, and will develop a practical plan for coping with reality. In these days of legal suits, with the uncertainty about what action a court of law will take, many educators shy away from controversial matters--they don't want to get involved. On the contrary, they must!

Reduced Psychological Support From Home...Historically, the United States has been an agrarian and an industrial society. We are rapidly moving toward a post-industrial society, toward a service orientation. This rapid change in our socio-economic system has had great costs on the family. In our earlier history, dating back only a few decades (perhaps less than three generations) the extended family was the cornerstone of our society. The extended family consisting of grandmas, grandpas, aunts, uncles, mothers and fathers, usually living within reasonable proximity of each other, provided considerable psychological support for the children. Today, the extended family is nearly a thing of the past, various members of the family are often separated by many miles across the United States and around the world. The notion of family gatherings is the exception rather than the rule. In California, for example, children have grandparents back in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, etc. and do most of their communicating via the telephone or via an occasional note through the mails.

Even the restricted nuclear family including parents and children is deteriorating at an alarming rate. Recent studies show that fifty two percent of the children enrolled in California schools come from broken homes; a majority of this population lives with a single parent. While single parents can offer love and psychological support, the challenge is sharpened considerably. Not having both parents frequently leads to adjustment difficulties on the part of students. To many children, psychological support comes from belonging to a group and caring about members of that group. When this isn't possible, some children seem to get into difficulty because they can, in this way, gain attention from someone--even if it is negative attention.

California is typically different from other parts of the country, but I was very surprised a few months ago while doing some consulting work in Utah, that the same single parent family circumstance seems to be common there. Considering the Mormon religion so prevalent in that part of the country. I anticipated considerably more stability than the California scene. Teachers and administrators with whom I was working gave strong opinions that single parent problems were as intense in Utah as in California. Based on recent statistics that suggest divorces are out-numbering marriages by a 3 to 2 margin, the problem of reduced psychological support may gain even more recognition.

If schools don't accept responsibility for at least some psychological support, where will it happen? Being in a group (as large as a 1,000-student school) is far different than being a part of the group; people can still be lonely in a crowd. To complicate the issue, discipline-problem-type students seek and receive psychological support from other peers who are lost and acting out. Outcomes aren't likely very positive.

'Conflict Between Home and School Philosophies...Educators are often inundated with advice about how to run a school; the advice comes solicited or not. Everyone, it seems to some educators, knows more about what ought to be happening in schools than those intimately involved in the day-to-day events.

There are numerous examples of parents who have basic conflicts with the operational philosophy of the specific school (when the school personnel have, in fact, gone to the trouble of defining an operational philosophy). When children come from one philosophical background, but are expected to spend a large bulk of their working hours in another type of environment, there's a good chance for conflict. Students seem to be placed in a position of accepting or rejecting one set of norms for another, i.e., the home or the school. Children are confronted with the question, "Should I accept the guidance offered by my parents or should I do what the school expects?" With this either/or position, the child is put in a no-win situation. No matter which groups s/he pleases, or displeases, someone else is going to be dissatisfied--and these are the people who are in control of the majority of rewards and punishments. For particularly young children, the situation is frustrating and anxiety-producing. Older children

have better chances for meeting the conflict, but the problem exists for them as well--usually at a time when they are coping with other changes in their lives that cause a variety of adjustments to be made, e.g., differences in boy-girl relationships, changes in the functions of the body, changes in the organizational arrangement of the school, etc.

Part of the obvious result of inconsistencies between the school and home philosophies is reflected by the creation of free schools and alternative schools, some in the private sector and some in the public sector. School districts such as Wichita, Kansas; Berkeley, California; Pasadena, California; and Tulsa, Oklahoma, have opened their districts to a variety of different philosophical foundations--ranging from super-open to super-closed systems. Invariably, the push for the alternative schools came from those parents and students who, in one way or another, were unhappy with the options available within the regualr system.

I should mention here that unhappiness with one approach doesn't necessarily mean people are clear on what they <u>really</u> want. The last time I took a look at national studies on the topic, the life-expectancy of alternative schools was less, even than that of school district superintendents. Superintendents generally last for the better part of two years; alternative schools live about 18 months, with rare exceptions. It's these exceptions where I believe we can gain direction. When there is philosophic congruence between the home and the school there is, typically, a zealot-like support for the schools. Two instances of this support comes to mind. The first example is Alternative School #1 in Seattle. There are about 150 students in this school. There is no way I could support much of what goes on in that school but let anyone try to close the place and all hell would break loose. The parents and students are adamant, what they have they won't give up. Or take the so-called "fundamental" schools in Pasadena. Recently I was in what might be called a debate with one of the school board members who supports the fundamentalist philosophy. He definitely had convictions about what ought to be happening in the alternative schools. While I couldn't agree with everything he had to say (especially on the topic of corporal punishment), I admired his ability to stand up for a position and I respected his right to have beliefs different from my own. I wish there were more parents, students and educators who could get together on what they believe and work to have institutions (where students study and learn) reflect those beliefs.

Naturally, all principles have exceptions--and so does this one; in fact, there are at least two exceptions that come quickly to mind. First, alternatives are acceptable as long as they are consistent with the Constitution of the Unites States--and the interpretations given by the Supreme Court. The implication obviously is it's unacceptable if parents promote the use of drugs, stealing, child abuse, etc. Schools promoted by residents in ancient Sparta, indeed, would be included in the unacceptable category.

Where all of this leads, I believe, is toward the recognition by educators of a society which supports the concept of philosophic pluralism. In my opinion, this is a prized and valued concept. So what does this mean to the administrator? First, the administrator has a responsibility to assess the congruence between the philosophy of the home and the school to determine where there is agreement and disagreement and the degree and/or magnitude of these relationships. Many psychologists believe that whatever takes place at school between 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock should be reasonably consistent with that which happens at home between 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock. (The exceptions mentioned earlier should be noted here.) What can the administrator do about matching the home and the school philosophies? Many schools have one philosophic option; can able administrators encourage and tolerate more than one option under the same roof? Where must action begin? What new learnings are required to meet the challenge?

If and when principals meet the challenge for determining the match and mismatch between home and school, it follows that action is expected. When this action fails to occur, there's little better than an even-money bet some students will find ways to fight against the system rather than to be a part of it. The fight is characterized by the "we vs. they" syndrome. If students are an important part of the school; if they feel they have ownership for the school and its functions; if they have a desire to work for effective support for the school; if they support the school rather than figure out ways to out-fox educators, there is good reason to believe discipline problems will be reduced.

'Increased Negativism About Schools and/or Authority Generally... Few people debate the argument the public image of schools has gone down-hill in recent years. The signs are numerous, e.g., articles or announcements in the media about declining test scores, angry cries of adults at school board meetings protesting ever-increasing property taxes, frequent proposals for recall elections for board members who have gained disfavor with one factor or another in the community.

Schools do too often generate problems for themselves; they really don't need help from their friends. But this negative help is exactly what educators have received in recent years. When people have been unable to get at other agencies or bureaucracies schools have filled the void where a scapegoat was needed. Schools and school boards are right there in full view for the taking; especially when the courts, the state governor, the legislators are seemingly inaccessible.

Mr. Nixon and other leaders (?), I believe, have caused the general public to feel less secure, to lose trust, to feel that nearly anyone in a position of authority has been a traitor. Anyone who is a

superintendent, principal, teacher, seems required to work doubly-hard to gain support from those with whom they associate.

There is no easy cure for the attitudinal ill that plagues; probably the best, singular approach is that of modeling the behavior we, as educators, expect from others. Undoubtedly, we'll need to communicate with myriad audiences[1]--this implies listening as well as talking. Educators must demonstrate accountability for achieving goals and objectives determined through parent-staff-student involvement.

The general public negativism indirectly affects discipline negatively because students often pick up the attitude that teachers and educators are arrogant and/or pompous and can't, therefore, be trusted. This attitude is predominant among the poor, although those of super-conservative and/or super-liberal philosophies appear to have similar attitudes.

Poor people seem negative for at least three reasons. Their early experiences in schools were often less than satisfactory; it is hard to be positive about things, people, places where past interactions have been negative. In addition, poor peoples' children generally are called on the carpet more fequently than other children. Among other things, this means poor parents receive more negative feedback from schools than other parerts.

Further, parents who are poor complain frequently that when they try to talk with educators the conversation seems to take place in some foreign tongue understood (or at least spoken) only by educators. The jargon we often use is confusing at best; jargon does little to help with communication. If the parent happens to also be non-English speaking, the difficulty of positive interaction is even more strained. Many educators, truly, have a major communication problem that should not (cannot) be ignored.

Those who have beliefs at the extremes of the philosophical spectrum often aren't in sympathy with the approaches taken by the typical school. The attitudes they generate in their own children isn't likely to make the job of the site administrator any less complex.

Administrators, in short, need to be aware of those factors causing discipline problems that stem from the home. It's a cop-out, though, to only look externally. Far-sight vision focused only on the home is insufficient. Myopic analysis is also required; what are the causal factors emanating from the school?

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[1] See Presentors Guide, Public Relations II, developed by Lew Armistead, ACSA, Burlingame, 1977.

The School

Ill-Defined School Purpose...Schools have been around forever; but trying to get parents and educators to decide what schools really ought to be accomplishing is similar to the proverbial search for the needle in the haystack. Nearly everyone has a different definition of the charge--and students are often caught in the void when there is no definite direction.

Following Sputnik our goal was fairly well defined. We were supposed to beat the Russians to the moon by putting our dollars and talents, through the National Defense Education Act, into efforts to develop outstanding mathematicians, scientists, foreign language experts. Along about the middle and latter part of the sixties and the early seventies some leaders decided we needed to make the schools more human--to open schools so people could do their own thing. We offered electives in some schools that by anyone's criteria could not be claimed basic, scholarly pursuits.

The arc of the pendulum swings back and forth; where it stops nobody knows. Even worse than having a child in a school where there is a conflict between the home and the school--because of philosophic differences--is the school where there is no operational philosophy at all.

In these schools not only are students lost at sea but so are teachers and administrators. A ship at sea without a captain or without positive direction is, sooner or later, in big trouble. The ship will run aground or mutiny will result. The analogy holds true for schools.

Too few schools have clearly defined their purposes; the student is often at a loss for knowing what is expected. Without clearly defined purposes--supported by daily practices--the lost student becomes more lost. Many classes function as though there is some secret, hidden agenda in the mind of the teacher. The student, approximately each six weeks, is supposed to guess at the secret--through an activity called the unit test. This kind of schooling is little more than a seat time challenge. A student must sit still long enough to keep out of trouble, so the stamp of approval can be put on the forehead.

Time in no way is a measurement of achievement; performance is the measurement of achievement. Students who aren't certain what is expected of them or what they should be getting out of an education often strike-out in one way or the other. Make no mistake, the strking out isn't limited to those kids who can't or won't learn; problems also come from particularly outstanding students who are bored with what isn't happening. This may begin as early as the first grade. The "gifted" child at this level is often identified as a behavior problem because s/he won't conform to those routines which seem to make little sense. That child is probably going to be a thorn where it hurts most if corrective modifications aren't made.

Some educational institutions do develop principles on which parents, educators, students agree--they have an important headstart. Their task, then, becomes one of matching the noble and global rhetoric of the philosophy with daily actions. Let me illustrate what I mean. Nearly all schools support the principles of positive reinforcement; that is, when students do something valuable they should receive some positive support for the effort. Walk into any school, though, and see how many corrected papers emphasize the number of items wrong rather than the number correct. Is this positive reinforcement?

Or how about the example I ran into the other day in Arizona. This was a kindergarten class. The children were using Dystar materials to help them with their phonics, so they could learn to read. This particular reading approach encourages youngsters to look at pictures and to match the sound on which they are working with the picture on a worksheet. On the day I visited the children were working on the "P" sound. A little girl, Kathy, had left a picture of a pickle unmarked and the teacher put a big, red check on the paper. The teacher definitely let Kathy know the right answer had not been made.

Kathy seemed like a bright little girl, so when I had a chance I wandered over to her desk and asked why she hadn't selected the pickle. She responded by saying, "Because it's a cucumber." And of course she was correct! Positive reinforcement?

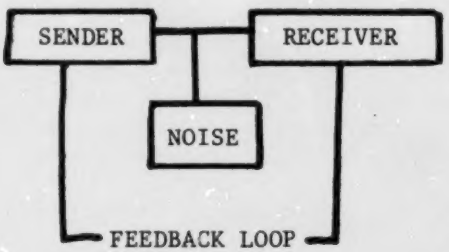
In each of these schools positive reinforcement was a targeted goal. But in neither case were they practicing what they believed. Hypocrisy isn't likely to attract a lot of support and trust. Administrators should take time, at least annually, to see how well others perceive the match between theory and practice. This assessment doesn't have to be overly elaborate. Simply ask students, parents and staff four simple questions:

(1) What do we do in our school that really works well for us?
(2) What do we do in our school that works pretty well but some improvements are still needed?
(3) What are we doing in our school that we really ought to terminate?
(4) What are we not doing in our school that we ought to initiate?

Data from these four questions can help the administrator know where to begin to help the school have a defined purpose--a purpose that has support from important constituents.

Inadequate Communication Network...To communicate one must send and receive messages without a great deal of "noise" causing confusion between what is said and what is understood. I've always found the

chart below helpful as I've thought about the communication process.



Think of the school as a sender in the model. Those who need to communicate have a responsibility for getting out a message as clearly as possible. Think, for a moment, about ways messages are frequently communicated in schools.

The first ineffective vehicle is the P.A. system. In very few schools does anyone stop to hear what is being said, and even when some people take the time to listen, the message is often garbled. The next ineffective communication device is the ditto master in the mailbox. Too often these don't get read--and even more often, they aren't understood. A third negative way to communicate is through the newspapers. In many communities educators invest infinitely more time correcting an erroneous statement made in the paper than the time used by the reporter to write the article.

Too often administrators are unaware of the factors which cause noise--as the receiver accepts the message. Feedback is seldom planned for.

With the occupational hazards associated with being a principal comes the responsibility to attack problems as they occur. Since there are only so many hours in the day, the principal can't get around to everything that needs to be done--or to talk with everyone who wants to be heard. Those who have held any kind of executive position know the people want to talk to the "head" person--and this is exceedingly time-consuming. One of the big complaints I get from teachers and students alike is the concern about the principal not being accessible. "He's never out on the campus to talk with us," comes often from students; "His door is always closed," is the comment teachers often give.

If the principal is unable to talk with students and staff, especially in informal settings, it's hard to know how a message should be sent, i.e., how receivers will likely hear the message. Methods for obtaining feedback are important so the sender can find out if the hearer received the message as it was intended. The three communication techniques mentioned earlier hardly have feedback loops built into the system.

When students and/or teachers aren't certain what messages are being sent, they frequently become alienated. There are numerous studies which confirm how alienated people act-out in unacceptable ways. In school, this acting-out results in discipline problems.

The reason to communicate with students to avoid alienation and the resulting discipline problems is rather obvious; the same may not be true for teachers. How do they figure into all this?

Well, anyone who has been a vice-principal, counselor, or principal working with children who have had discipline problems is aware that some few teachers in a school can cause more problems than all the problem-kids put together. On some staffs, in fact, the percentage of problem teachers is far greater than problem children. Working with these teachers is more of a challenge than working with most students who may, periodically, get into trouble but who usually seem to roll with the punches. Ask any vice-principal or dean in charge of discipline and I'll bet that person will tell you less than a handful of teachers send 80 percent of the student problems to the office for attention. This small number of teachers may in fact be more alienated than the students.

How severe is this alienation? Pretty severe I'm afraid. Almost ten years ago, Chuck Kettering, then the president of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, listed as CFK, Ltd., felt the climate of the school was less than what it should be. He believed concentrated attention on this problem was required. One effort to assess the accuracy of Kettering's hunch was made through a rather informal assessment of teacher comments in the faculty lounge. Evaluators simply sat in the lounge and charted the number of positive and negative comments made by the staff who visited the lounge.

Everyone knows the lounge is a place where therapy is practiced, e.g., letting the hair down and blowing off steam. No one, however, had any notion that the magnitude of killer statements would be as great as they were; negative comments outscored positive comments 94 to 6. Incredible! Undoubtedly, there were at least a few alienated people in this group; and the alienation that was expressed by their negativism was often carried over into the classroom. Their negativism may have been the root causes so many children from selected classes were sent to the office for disciplinary action.

Yes, indeed, administrators need to be aware of the communication requirements for both students and staff internally and for myriad other audiences externally. Communication is something that happens, whether we want it to or not. Even if we don't do anything, we are definitely sending a message--and all too often that isn't the message we want to transmit. Positive communication requires positive pre-planning.

Before leaving the discussion regarding the communication network there is one other system of communication worth mentioning. It is a powerful, informal system operative in every school I'm familiar with. This system is called the "rumor mill." Because there is probably no way to keep the rumor mill from taking its toll, perhaps the best we can expect is to neutralize the potential devastating effects of a negative, rumor mill. To neutralize rumors and gossop, even greated attention must be given to the formal communication techniques and devices used. If communication could be improved in most schools, people could better understand what the school stands for, and, in turn, better understand each other. The results of this better understanding are less suspicion, less mistrust, less fear, less hostility, fewer discipline problems.

Centralized Decision Making...At first glance, one may wonder how decision making is a causal factor creating discipline problems. One need look no further than the research study conducted by Jim Tunney, Assistant Superintendent in Montebello (California) and member on the Steering Committee for the Collegial Association for the Development and Renewal of Educators.

Tunney's research, conducted under the auspices of the University of Southern California, concluded by identifying three causes of disenchantment with schools. Causes were: (1) lack of trust; (2) lack of respect for people as unique individuals with inherent needs for personal worth and dignity; and (3) lack of opportunities for input.

It's this third variable I address here. (At least some attention has been given to the two earlier points.)

In today's schools (or any institution for that matter) people want (demand) a piece of the action; clearly they want to be heard. They want their ideas to have some influence that can be recognized. No longer are people content to let appointed or elected officials do their thinking for them; a forum to be heard is expected.

One of the reasons it's expected, perhaps, is because it is now the law of the land that advisory committees and other groups have input on school policies and practices. Certainly, many educators have travelled some rough roads, often marked with hazardous detours, as they have learned to work with advisory groups. Over time, many administrators have come to expect and appreciate the contributions made by community groups. (For more detail on this topic, refer to the Association of California School Administrators' Operations Notebooks #16 and #17, Burlingame, California.) There is definite, positive movements for advocating advisory groups--although there is admittedly much yet which remains to be learned.

Progress toward the involvement of students in policies and procedures appropriate for the school doesn't seem to be gaining momentum the way adult advisory groups have. Oh, yes, some districts have put a token student on the Board of Education--but the student often isn't "heard" even when time is given for the person to speak. Student councils haven't, it seems, changed very much. They are still re-writing the student handbook, determining the theme for the homecoming floats, and deciding which "rock" group will play at the prom. Decisions in these areas may be important to a few people in school,

but the decisions have little to do with the daily life of the students who attend the school. Without some form of input, students have no reason to "own" the school; the school doesn't become an extension of those things students care about. When people don't have an opportunity to offer ideas and suggestions, it's hard for them to feel positive. Funny, I wonder what the results would be if we were to take five high schools at random across the country and five penal institutions and to then determine where those in the custodial service of the institution have had greatest impact on what happens. Actually, I'm a little afraid of what might be found.

Really, I don't want to be too negative on what is not happening as far as decentralizing the decision making to students is concerned because some schools are doing outstanding jobs; they are being rewarded in such a way they are further expanding their efforts.

Pacific Grove (California) High School, for instance, has grown a lot over the past years by getting students more concerned about and involved in school procedures. Delta High School in Santa Maria and East San Jose High School have worked diligently to obtain student and community involvement. They did--and they're pleased.

Some school administrators reject the decentralized decision making process; often because they either don't agree others should participate in the process or they don't know how to learn the skills to involve others in decision making. And,of course, another constraint is the anticipation of wall-to-wall meetings. It's much more efficient for one person to make decisions than to have a group involved.

Ultimately, the principal may decide to ignore the entire concept of involvement and decentralized decision making. If this is the case, the site administrator should choose the alternative position from a point of intellectual analysis (calculated risk) rather than from a point of ignorance.

Inadequate Curricula...A study some years ago, conducted at the Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory in Albuquerque concluded that if any one of the following factors is negative learning will not take place.

Indeed, student behavior is negative in proportion to the number of factors intervening negatively in their personal lives.

The factors include:

- Negative responses to course offerings.
- Negative attitudes about school.
- Negative attitudes about self.
- Negative attitudes about staff members from various ethnic groups.
- Negative attitudes about the teacher's role or culture.

When students are negative about the content of course material, learning doesn't take place. But how can some students--students who can't read very well or students who read extremely well and are bored by it all-get turned on by some of their reading materials? Students who see little utility in their academic studies often seek outlets in other ways--these other ways may be negative. Recently I had occasion to do some work at a very large high school in Illinois; this school has more than 4,500 students enrolled. It is a reasonably prestigous school located north of Chicago. In a discussion with the English Department staff I was taken back a couple of steps from what I thought was happening in most of our schools. What surprised me was the elation expressed by the English teachers who were excited because 4,500 students had taken or would take the Tale of Two Cities. Try as I might I could formulate no half-way strong rationale why every student in school ought to study the Two Cities. (Incidentally, when questioned, even the English teachers had to do some O. J. Simpson footwork to support their position.) Certainly, there are at least some students in the school who don't need the Tale of Two Cities, and for these the curriculum is inadequate.

Much more could be said about the inadequacy of the curriculum. Fortunately, the ECE Program in California has started to call attention to the improvement of the curriculum for elementary children. The analysis and implementation of new approaches is long overdue; the challenge at the secondary level may be greater and more difficult than at the elementary level.

Let's take a look at the other previously listed factors for a moment to see how they relate to student behavior.

If students are negative about the school, learning will not take place. In most schools, there is a small percentage of students very difficult to control by any method. These students cause problems for the "good" students. Too often the good students become negative toward a school because of rules put into motion in an attempt to control the disruptors. When good students must get passes to go to the restroom, must refrain from using the library and science laboratories, must reduce their own self-discipline and self-direction efforts, they tend to feel they aren't trusted, that they are punished for other students' misconduct. It's difficult to trust others when you feel "they" don't trust you.

Another factor: Self-worth! Some students feel pretty uncomfortable when they assess their personal worth. When one receives the message s/he isn't worthwhile, one quickly comes to the conclusion that what is said (verbally and non-verbally) is fact. People are unable to care for and about others if they don't care for or about themselves.

Many minority and low income children attend school where the values of educators are in conflict with the children's. Educators who make no effort to understand and/or respect alternative cultures put those children in an untenable position. Educators who provide a model for learning as a life-long process can demonstrate in action what they expouse by showing they care enough to learn about those with whom they work. These are the educators who are willing to fit the school to the children rather than vice-versa.

Finally, learning will not take place if students don't have respect for the individual educator. There are as many stereotypes about the middle-class, Anglo teacher as there are about culturally different children. These false stereotypes also need to be corrected. Maybe someday it will be possible for all of us to look upon each other as people--people with many similarities, as well as difference, which we can respect and admire. Maybe the concept of the hyphenated American will dissolve.

Each of these preceding factors is related to the curriculum as the curriculum is anything that happens in the context of the school to enhance the teacher-learning process.

How can the curriculum become more adequate? The answer to the question is an individual school matter dependent upon the philosophy of those who attend the school. From my personal, biased, point of view, the answer must take into account both an attitude about teaching--learning and considerations about actual, institutional offerings, courses.

From an attitude perspective, we must move away from the notion we teach subjects rather than children. Apparently the higher one progresses on the educational ladder the greater the chance s/he will be taught a subject as opposed to being taught as a person with unique needs. In some cases these needs will be similar to the needs of others--but in the majority of instances, the needs will be personalized. Many elementary schools retain this client-oriented approach through the early childhood years (3rd grade). Programs begin to get more and more specialized as the student progresses until each academic discipline is conveniently divided so it can be taught in a 50 minute block of time each day.

There are some excellent schools where children come first, where teachers really try to think of children as different people with different needs, but the majority of schools I know don't fall into this classification. Attitudinally, we have a long way to go, especially at the secondary level. Sometimes we delude ourselves by thinking we persoanlize learning by sending home a one-paragraph course description students and parents are supposed to read and then decide what they need for course work. This is personalized concern?

Is it possible students are short-changed because parents don't know and/or understand and teachers don't care? Or is it the attitude, "Counselors are supposed to do that, I'm here to teach history, not to get involved with individual concerns?"

From a course perspective, I believe we need to have at least three options available to students--at all levels--if we are to personalize their programs. Other educators may describe what I'm talking about in other words, but I use the terms:

- Survival skills, the 6 R's;
- Taste the spinach options; and
- Mini-courses.

Both the what and the how are worth considering when implementation of these alternatives is analyzed.

Survival skills for today's society, in my opinion, are not limited to the traditional 3 R's. Additionally our focus should be: Rights, respect, responsibility. These may be as critical, if not more critical, than reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic. The fact is, the 6 R's are all important. When survival skills are taught, they should be offered in such a way each student is aware of what s/he should accomplish (learn). These minimal foundations usually require some form of diagnosis and prescribed studies when expected levels of competency are not reached.

Kids can't (and won't) feel very good about themselves when they feel they are not progressing toward some recognized goals. (Incidentally, a recent HEW Special Report stated that 29 states either have or are contemplating going to minimal competency requirements before high school diplomas can be awarded. Will be interesting to see how California responds to this change; as of June, 1978, each school district with secondary students is expected to approve minimal, high school competencies--as opposed to courses of study approved in the past.)

While probably all students--with the exception of those with learning disabilities--need survival skills, how they get these skills is not the same for all students; certainly they won't all take the Tale of Two Cities. Here's where the expertise of the teacher must be utilized to its fullest. When the teacher is aware of the needs of the student and when the teacher is knowledgeable about the learning style of the student, the teacher and the student can work together toward clearly defined objectives. Two people with the same, recognized, explicit goals are more likely to reach the same target than two people in a fuzzy situation where there are few, if any, identified goals. By the way, the other 3 R's can be taught formally, the same as the traditional 3 R's, although one doesn't find this happening in very many schools. (A subsequent portion of this paper shows how this can be done.)

The second type of curricular offering which I believe necessary is what I call taste the "spinach" experience. In my opinion, there are things adults know that students don't. There are some experiences students would seldom try if they weren't introduced to them by teachers or other adults. Introduction, though, doesn't mean the student needs to be stuck with the experience forever; "forever" in the life of some students covers a time span of approximately one semester. Try it, you might like it, is the prevailing attitude for taste the spinach exposures. After the period of a couple of weeks, the student should know whether s/he is interested in further, in-depth study.

Recently I had a chance to observe the taste the spinach alternative in action. After about two weeks, eight young men (upper elementary students) decided they wanted to continue with creative body movements (ballet). There is no way boys in this particular school would have been attracted to this activity if the taste the spinach option had not been open--and if a left-end from a nearby university football team and an olympic pole vaulter had not assisted with the learning exercise. The eight students tried the spinach and liked it.

The third option is what I call mini-courses. Time, I believe, ought to be put aside in every child's program when s/he can study whatever is of interest to the student. This study might take the form of a mini-course, an activity explored in-depth over an extended period of time--either inside or outside of the school. Many schools find mini-courses offer good opportunities to bring community resources people into the school to help teach special offerings--as well as a time when students can give information about their interests to other students. Most of us as educators realize we became knowledgeable about a topic when we taught it to someone else; mini-courses are good times for this.

Learning for the sake of learning is a principle many schools talk about, even when they know many people learn because of the punishment for not learning or because they must jump the hoops to qualify for admissions to other, higher levels of learning. Perhaps one of these days it will be legitimate for students to learn because they want to--rather than learning because they will earn a grade that will be recorded on a transcript.

A recent experience pointed out to me why it is so necessary to help people learn to learn. Working with a secondary school in the Southern part of California, I had the pleasure of drinking a cola while sitting around the pool following a day's deliberations. The young woman with whom I was chatting had graduated as the valedictorian of her class the preceding June. She had returned to work with the staff to help take a look at where the school had been and where it was headed. As we were talking, Barbie went about the task of completing her first year at college study-assignment sheet. One course she put down was home economics.

I was intrigued with the home economics selection and asked her "Why?" She responded by telling me she was frightened about taking home economics in high school because she was fearful she would get a "C." The "C" would lower her grade point average and, unfortunately, chances of being admitted into the University of California at Santa Barbara would be that much more difficult.

On the basis of what took place with Barbie's help the school opted to start an arrangement whereby twice during the year students are introduced (through mini-courses) into areas they have thought about but where they have feared to tread. Also, when concerned about something they really believed worthwhile, they found it legitimate to audit the course--receiving credit but no grade. This organizational alternatives is possible in nearly every junior high/middle school and high school I know.

Finally, mini-courses may be one of the few times when students have a chance to see how the parts of the curriculum are fitted together into some useful form (what some people call "making the curriculum serve a relevant purpose"). This is a time when students can begin to see how the conventional 3 R's fit into the scheme of real-life situations. In one school, I know, mini-courses have included such things as: organic gardening, camping, telescope making, and aviation. It's clear to the neophyte aviators putting together a flight plan why reading, writing and arithmetic are so fundamental to the pursuit of usable knowledge. Putting the fundamental tools to work generates a much different attitude in students than those exercises on page 92--completed because the teacher tells the student to do them and because the textbook writers know what needs to be done.

Different schools find different ways to put the three options into practical application--and that's as it should be. Those that do, will, at least theoretically, have an adequate curriculum as well as a reduction in discipline cases.

Staff Fear...This is rather a touchy subject, probably the reason it isn't mentioned often. But the fact is, some teachers are frightened by teenagers generally and minorities specifically. People who are frightened, especially when confronted with student misbehavior, are likely to aggravate the situation. At a time when a person needs to be calm and collected, there is a tendency to be excitable and irrational. Students who want to cause trouble can somehow sense when a person is frightened; this type of youngster quickly learns to be a master at the "baiting" technique. The baiting game usually drives the educator more and more into the corner until the person supposedly trying to solve the problem stimulates rather than reduces the friction.

A response like the one I'm describing--as unfortunate as it is--is often found in newly integrated schools where administrators and teachers bend over backwards to be fair to minority youngsters.

This well-meaning effort frequently backfires because both minority and majority become offended at what comes off as two sets of standards. Where there are two standards, as unintentional as the action may be, the process causes alienation among student groups.

Site leaders have an important responsibility to let people know there is one set of guidelines for acceptable behavior. Moreover, the principal needs to be quick to recognize both covert and overt signs of discrimination--stemming from either students or staff--and meet the challenge head-on. This isn't easy (what an understatement). Undoubtedly there are times when some educators, if possible, should be counseled into other vocations although dismissal seems a thing of the past in most states where I've been.

By taking the action mentioned earlier, administrators can go a long way toward reducing tension. Tension often manifests itself in very ugly ways.

Stress...Perhaps one of the biggest problems faced by those who have discipline concerns is stress--it may be the #1 culprit Mr. Toeffler has written and spoken extensively through his works on the future and future studies about stress factors in today's society. Many people support Toeffler's position that we are all on an ever-increasing in speed treadmill--going faster and faster. There are so many quick changes it seems nearly impossible to adapt to all of them. What has happened, indeed, at times boggles the mind. There just seems to be too many stimuli to cope with. The multiple stimuli, it appears, have led to a kind of group psychosis which supports the concept, if we are doing "more" we are obviously doing "better." More-better isn't a particularly balanced equation.

Stress is responded to in many ways by different people. But the overwhelming majority seem to respond by having a low boiling point, a shortness of response to others, and a lack of concern for those who need it most. People struggling to take care of #1 seldom have the time and/or the inclination to care for or about others.

Frequently teachers tell me they simply can't motivate their students. While the teachers may be having problems getting very much productive work out of some students, a problem other than motivation may be involved. I would argue, in fact, that the trouble comes from over-motivation (over-stimulation) rather than from a lack of it. Everyone seems to be after the child's time, e.g., the piano teacher, the school, the television set, little league, boy scouts, etc. (the same samples of time-grabbers are applicable for girls as well). Some children have very few minutes in their young lives when they aren't running from one obligation for participation in another one. I'd hypothesize some children learn to tune-out some activities so they can survive participating in others.

Strange as it may seem, because it occurred during a half-time football show in a game between UCLA and Alabama, attention was drawn to this "do more" problem. One of the suggestions offered was what they called an "old revolutionary" idea. The idea was for the family to agree on one evening per week when they would be at home working on relationships with each other. What an intriguing notion--a member of my family might also be my friend!

When both the teacher and the student find they are in stressful circumstances, there is less probability they will work together. When each fails to give and take a little the classroom begins to look like a confrontation site.

Depending on the state, teachers and administrators are expected to have "extra" programs in the classroom. A typical elementary school in California, for example, has some, if not all, of the following programs: ESEA, Title I; Title IV-C; Title VII; MGM: ECE: SB90. There are others I've probably forgotten but the listing is sufficient to make the point, and the point is--teachers are often so busy doing <u>things</u>, they can't seem to find time to teach. With the accent on accountability (and I'm not arguing against it) there often seems a greater emphasis on paper shuffling than on interaction with students. The important intrinsic rewards of being with children and seeing them grow are nullified when one must invest considerable time keeping track of a vast number of profile charts. Obviously some sensible balance between student concerns and accountability concerns must be made--but this isn't a lesson easily learned. Some excellent teachers and administrators have come to believe the job is unmanageable; they have left the profession. Other educators often feel miserable because they can't find ways to get out. Of course, the misery is translated to the students--and the students respond by either conforming or by turning their talents to outwitting school authorities.

We have, perhaps, moved too far too fast toward a technological society. But we aren't likely to turn that action around at any immediate time in the foreseeable future. We'll have to cope by using our brains to figure out more effective means for combatting an almost unseen and unrecognized enemy. We will!

<u>Dealing with the Causes</u>

Again, I need to emphasize the above-mentioned factors are causal in nature--they are at the root of many problems (not all, many). Naturally, the wise administrator will recognize each school site is different; no two places require the same approach. And therein is one of the major problems for concerned administrators. If one cookbook approach were possible, we could ordain solutions to discipline problems and have corrections made immediately. Unforunately, when

working with people (and education is a people business) such an ordination is impractical, if not impossible.

If one agrees with any of the preceding causal elements, the thrust becomes one of taking action to meet the challenge of the causes. Let me offer this precaution again: To ignore the daily matters of discipline is unwise--they can't be ignored, they must be dealt with. The thoughtful school administrator, however, will give precise care to long-range needs and will provide leadership toward an agreed upon strategy for improvement. This strategy is likely to work best when there are parents, students, and staff members involved in formulating and carrying out the action-steps. Although there often is a fine line between remediation and prevention measures, focus in this document is placed on preventive prescriptions.

Discipline problems need not be overwhelming; they need attention, a direct plan of attack. How about a couple of success stories? One school, for example, completing a major turn-around in the past few years is Cleveland High School in Seattle, Washington. In 1971, the school was besieged with racial and other types of human problems. Perhaps the peak of the difficulty was reached when the students burned a police car in the student parking lot. The principal of the school had been assaulted at the holiday basketball tournament when the crowd broke into a riot. Without doubt, there were many clues calling for action. The principal began (with the students, staff and parents) a major effort to establish pride in the school. The drive for pride was accomplished in many ways, too numerous to go into here. But the major outcome less than five years after the program was started was the recognition by the staff and other people in the community that it no longer was necessary to have security police at school functions. Police officers who once spent considerable time in the hallways were no longer needed. The attitude of the students about the school was sharply improved; accomplishments grew; attitudes among people in the school grew less hostile. Definitely a success story.

Or another example is an elementary school in the San Francisco Bay Area. The staff had been having a very difficult time getting students to attend school--not only the habitual truants, but the students who felt the environment was simply too unsafe. (Might add here that the orientation for the new staff members in this school was to help them learn to identify the pieces brought together when a "zip gun" is produced, e.g., wire, pipe, wood handle, etc. Fairly difficult school!) Staff members at the school found they couldn't maintain any continuity with the students because so many were absent so often. Amazingly, attendance figures dropped below 52 percent some days during the week. Even on the best days, there were nearly as many students out as in. The concerned people in the school decided to launch an "all out" effort to get students back to school. To help the horse drink the water, it is first necessary to get the horse to the water (or vice-versa). Following the analogy, the school staff decided to take the water to the horse

and to, thereby, get the horse to come to the water.

Their plan of action was to start a special telephone procedure and to initiate "happygrams," a written communication plan. The system worked something like this:

The teachers and administrators began to identify the adults with whom the students (not always teachers) related at school. When possible, the person who seemed to get along best with the student would get on the phone and give a personal message about how important the child was to the successful and smooth functioning of the school and how much the person wanted to see the child at school. The sincere feeling of genuine caring was transmitted to the student. Often during the course of the conversation, the teacher became aware of simple problems bothering the student. With just a few words of encouragement or often just by listening, the problem (the minor ones) seemed to dissolve. Rather than wondering why the youngsters were always into one thing or another, they began to wonder how the young people managed to do as well as they did. There certainly was a new respect generated.

Coupled with the telephone system was a "happygrams" process. This process called for responsibility on the part of each staff member to identify four students each day who were making some sort of positive contribution. Further, it was the responsibility of the educators to write sincere, complimentary notes to the students and to forward the notes to the students' homes. (Notes that aren't genuine or educators who can't find something positive to say are better off out of the plan.) Many of the students had never had a positive comment from school delivered to their home. Most had not done very well academically; much of the contact with the school was on some sort of problem-issue. Too, many of the parents of the children hadn't had very successful experiences with educational institutions when they were in school and didn't put a very high value on education. A majority of the parents were very responsive, positively, to the compliments mailed home. They were very appreciative of their own children and reinforced much of the complimentary comments in the notes. (Any parent who has received a compliment about his or her son/daughter knows how personal pride is enhanced by this type of recognition.)

The planned action worked well in this school. Rather than having nearly half of the student population absent for one reason or another, the staff found over 88 percent of the students attending regularly. By almost anyone's evaluation, there was strong evidence the plan made sense.

These case studies illustrate educational leaders can do something about the problems that face them; there is reason for hope. The remainder of this Manual focuses on practical ways to overcome causes of disciplinary hassles; suggestions for immediate action are presented.

A Review of the Literature and Related Research

Educational literature is replete with information related to effective discipline. Much of the literature, however, addresses the issue of what to do after the problem has erupted rather than toward steps to take to prevent the eruption. ERIC apparently has over 5,000 individual entries on the topic of discipline; certainly, there is more to read than time one has to read. Authors such as Glasser and Hymes offer very valuable tips on effective means for both preventive and remedial discipline procedures--humane discipline procedures! They agree children should not run wild; children need responsible limits set. Messages (overt and covert) to children when limitations are not established tend to tell them adults don't care enough to give guidance. Even though students sometimes offer heated debate when limitations are established, there is ample evidence to believe they, too, know and respect the reasons behind realistic limitations.

While there is much written, there are few, concrete preventative examples of actions administrators, working with others, can take. On the pages that follow are 40 positive, practical, preventative plans for action. Each of the plans is operable in at least one school in the United States I've visited. Some of the examples are underway in a number of schools and some schools practice more than one plan.

No school has adopted the entire array of plans. It's unlikely this would be a viable approach. The administrator using this manual shouldn't think in terms of taking on 15 new projects. Look over the list and think of the problems and resources available at the local site; pick and choose from those that seem to make sense for local needs. Off hand, I'd say anyone who tries to implement more than four of the suggestions would be biting off more than can be chewed. Discipline may be the #1 problem in some schools, but after that's under control there are a couple of other goals to strive for--not every ounce of energy can be put into four special plans. Use sound professional judgment!

The plans listed work...at least in one school. They may or may not work in other schools. If not, recycle; that is, give further thought to the problem and generate new solutions. Don't stick with a plan not paying off.

Action for Educators

How does one get a handle on the problems? It's been useful to me to think of the prescriptions as falling under three umbrellas. This is just my way of looking at the matter and the approach may not be especially helpful to others. For what it's worth, the three umbrella categories include:

- Logistics and/or materials
- Processes
- Programs

Under each of these headings are many specific plans that can be identified. The first category is by far the easiest to implement (logistics and/or materials). Generally there is little, if any, money involved with these plans--usually a large number of involved people is not required; the plans have quick closure--people can see quickly the results of their toil.

The process category, however, takes on a new dimension, that of involving other people. Processes are more difficult to implement. There is usually a reasonable amount of time involved (due to meetings with other individuals), usually group cooperation is required to make the plan work, and some expenditure of money may be required. Results usually take longer to achieve. Correspondingly, results are often more powerful and lasting than those attained via the logistics/ materials strategies.

Program plans are by far the most difficult to implement even though they usually have the greatest long range pay-off. These plans typically include both people and curricular materials. Frequently some in-service staff development is necessary. Often a modest outlay of funds is necessary to purchase materials and/or specialized training. Few schools have gotten around to implementing plans under this umbrella; those that have believe they have made appreciable headway toward their goal of reduced discipline problems.

When reviewing specific suggestions, the administrator is encouraged to think of his/her school and the causal factors (mentioned earlier) which seem to influence what happens there. Try to match solutions with causes.

Logistics and/or Materials

- Appreciates Board
- Film Project
- Environments
- Analyze Rules
- Adult Volunteers
- Art Project for School Pride
- Imaginative Scheduling
- Celebrate Learning
- Cafeteria and Playground Programs

Few of the titles give much indication about the plan's nitty-gritty. Some of the plans need greater explanation than others--the paragraphs following add clarity to each of the ideas.

Appreciates Board...An "Appreciates Board" is a bulletin board placed in a faculty lounge for the purpose of encouraging staff members to appreciate each other. Near the bulletin board are placed some index cards and felt pens. A teacher appreciative of something special the librarian did might write a note on a card and then stick the card on the board. Not only does the librarian see the "thank you," but so do other people on the staff. This method was used in one school to cause a turn-around in the dominant attitude in the faculty lounge; the attitude changed from predominately negative to predominately positive--and the predominant optimism carried over into the classroom with the ultimate reduction in discipline hassles.

An appreciates board is very easy to put together; seems a small investment to gain important outcomes.

Film Project...A school in Portland tried a rather unique approach to it's discipline problems by analyzing what was happening in the school. They concluded the majority of their problems were coming from about two precent of the students; in this high school two percent amounted to about 40 teenagers. But these 40 were driving the folks up the wall; what to do about them?

The staff decided sugar would catch more interest than punishment. So they decided they would appeal to the ego of the most difficult youngsters in school. Two staff members agreed to take on the assignment of finding the "nerds" (as they were called) busy at some constructive, academic effort. When the students were caught studying, one of the teachers would snap the shutter on a Brownie camera, capturing that student's study moment for posterity.

Moreover, the teachers took their favorite snapshots and had them blown up poster-size, similar to the posters of the Fonz, Jane Russell, Elvis Presley. These posters were placed in a very conspicuous place in school (front hall) so everyone could see them. The results were fascinating.

Everyone had premonitions the posters wouldn't last--that they would be defaced or destroyed in less than a week. The fact is, they weren't touched. The nerds were very protective about anyone messing around with their picture--and what's more with anyone messing around in their school. For some of the kids, it was the first time they ever felt a part of the institution. Quite a pay-off all the way around. Incidentally, the film project seemed to be very effective for about 3/4 of the "nerd" population. The staff felt the remainder who weren't satisfied needed more specialized attention (the help of psychologists and psychiatrists) than the staff was able to provide.

Environment...Students seem to respond favorably to a school when they perceive they are a part of the school. One way to get at this--at any age or grade level--is to help students create their own learning environment--so they own it.

One example of this comes from a high school located just south of San Jose. At one time they had enormous difficulties keeping restrooms in one piece. Nearly every imaginable crime took place in one, particular girl's restroom; got so bad in there very few students would go in. Even fewer educators would venture near the spot. A brave Dean of Women, however, did take the gamble--and upon entering found two young lovelies practicing their explicit poetry writing skills on the bathroom walls.

The punishment the Dean gave to the artists was to have them paint the restroom. The artists chose a design all their own, void of the four letter epitaphs. Amazingly, crimes in the restroom came to a screeching halt. Today nearly anyone can go into the restroom--anyone, that is, except those who have thoughts of defacing the environment.

Students at the elementary level can create their environments by redesigning given areas of the classroom. Soft environments made from pillows can give a comfortable place for children to go when they want a quiet area. Tri-wall is a cardboard medium many teachers and children have learned to use when creating their own environment.

People need some private life--space, some territory they can call their own. Lockers in most schools sometimes fill this need. (When stuff inside lockers has been stolen, perhaps the need for private space explains why individuals from whom things were stolen have been so offended.) In any case, private space can be created in individual rooms by designing cubbies or ice-cream cartons in such a way each person has a personal area--if ever so small. The learning process associated with this is to help individuals learn they can put things in their private space that is as safe as if it were put in a locked safe. When this ideal becomes a reality a very valuable lesson is learned.

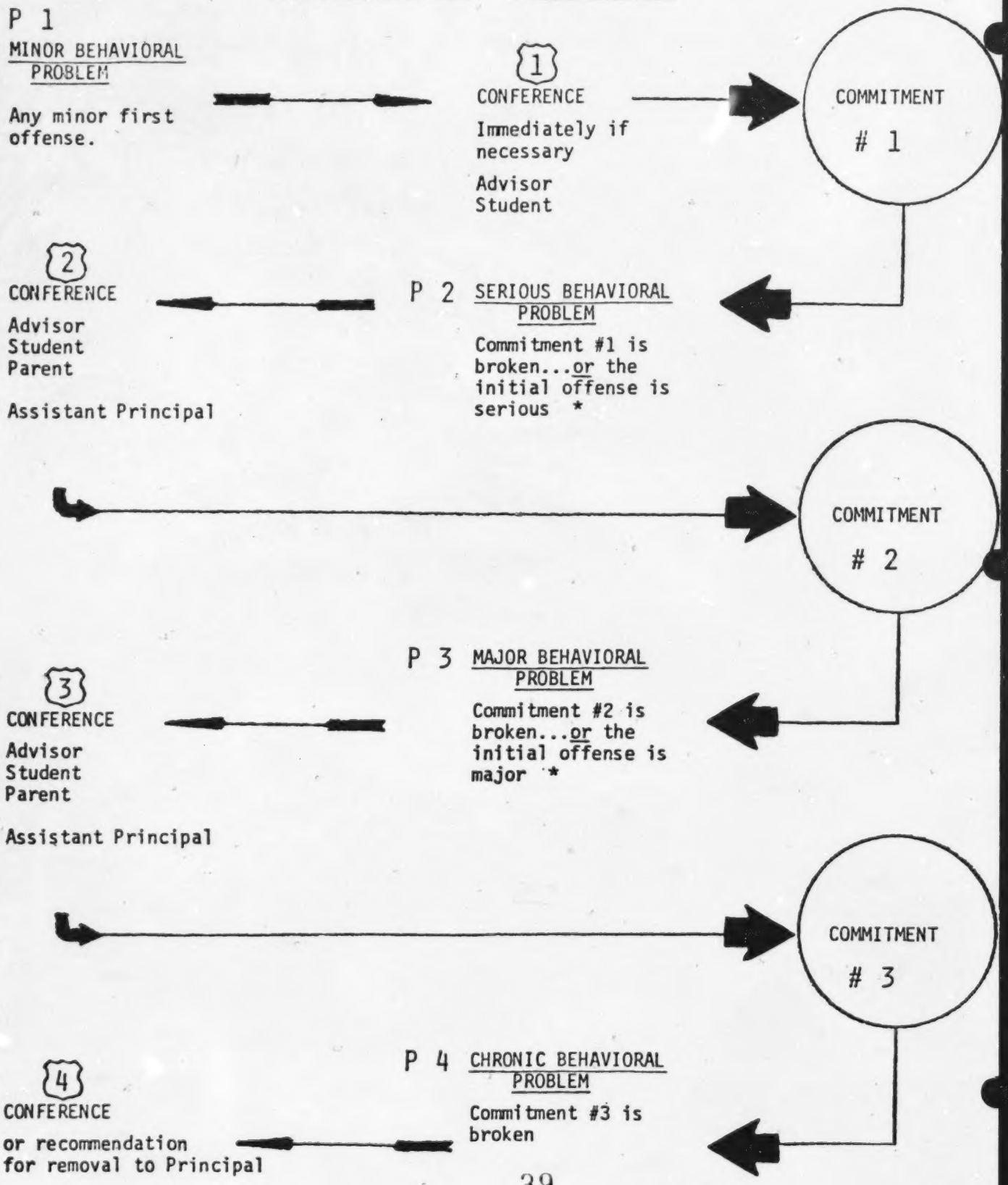
Some schools have had frequent bouts with an enemy called "vandalism." Windows are broken, walls defaced, playground equipment destroyed. For whatever reason, people seem to strike out at what they perceive the school stands for by destroying the place. Able educators in schools where this has happened have reached out to the community for help. By reaching out, they've been able to solicit those living around the school to help with the construction of outdoor environments. Ferro cement types of structures have been created. Tires have been put together in creative and imaginative patterns--young kids love playing in and on them.

In one community, the U.S. Navy Seabees brought in their heavy equipment to help with the leveling of the land and with the digging of holes for posts. Donated telephone poles were put in the holes and used cargo nets (from the government surplus depot) were attached to the poles. People from the neighborhood played endlessly on the environments they built--moreover, the neighbors kept an eye-out on the school so others couldn't take negative advantage of the school after it was closed in the evening or on weekends. Although not a perfect batting average, one school in a year's period of time moved from an incidence of weekly acts of vandalism to the asset side of the ledger where only one act of vandalism was committed all year--and the person doing that was turned in by one of the friends of the school.

Analyze Rules...If it's true many students are being alienated by the schools, it's a good idea to review the rules to see if they do what they're supposed to. Are good students punished because rules are designed to control those uncontrollable? When this is the case, not only do "bad guys/gals" cause problems but so do the good kids.

After careful consideration, one school adopted a procedure illustrated by the chart below--a procedure they believed protected the rights of the individuals fairly and consistently against those who seemed to be out of tune with the school song.

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS



The purpose of this scheme was to help everyone know what was expected. They believed in the school (as I do) most people wanted to know what expectations others had for them. Said another way, this means freedom within structure.

Of particular significance in this example is the fact the school had few rules. When there are many rules it behooves the administration to make certain they are carried out, or the administration will be scoffed at if there are rules not enforced. No one wants or needs to be a police person all the time; the fewer the rules the greater the energy available to devote to the essentials.

Finally, as the rules of the school are analyzed, the process should involve all those affected--parents, board members, administrators, teachers, students. Due process for students needs to be built into the discipline design. Unfortunately, too few schools seem to have the inclination to reconsider their rules and discipline policies. If they had the opportunity to see the turn-around that took place in the school referred to here, there is a chance other reviews would be made.

Adult Volunteers...In schools where discipline problems are severe, I'm doubtful the regular student-teacher ratio is adequate. Other members of the community need to recognize the extent of the problem and their aid needs to be enlisted. Here are two or three quick examples of how community volunteers can be put to good use--both inside and outside school.

- Cooler...The "cooler" is a location in a school where students go to "cool off." The cooler can be under the guidance of a volunteer aide as it is in Ossining, New York.

  When a student feels s/he is getting hot under the collar, permission to report to the cooler is given. Here the person in charge takes the name of the individual and alerts the attendance office. The adult in charge has only one other resonsibility--to see that the person coming in does not bother other youngsters in the room. Since no discipline problem has erupted, the student (when calm) is able to return to class.

  In most schools, the youngster is sent to the office, usually to see a vice-principal. Both are then in a no-win situation. If the vice-principal fails to support the teacher (and at times this is mighty difficult) the vice-principal upsets the teacher; if the student isn't supported, s/he frequently feels rejected, putting the blame on the vice-principal. There are certainly some circumstances when win/lose arrangements need not exist. The cooler can help keep "losses" to a minimum.

•Driver Education...A community aide can also come from the local police department. Selected officers can help immeasurably by teaching driver education (from my own biased viewpoint they ought to be teaching it anyway, and not in the regular school setting). There are two reasons for considering the enlistment of the local gendarmes. First, most police departments have an excellent defensive, driving program; their officers do an outstanding job of teaching. Second, and perhaps the most important, is the opportunity for young people to meet officers of the law in a setting other than that of confrontation. The positive attitude that stems from such a planned program is very useful. The strengths of all segments of the community need to be called on for assistance.

•Mentor...The community mentor program is one which calls on community volunteers from all walks of life. Students are assigned to those community leaders. For example, in some cities the mayor, members of the court system, doctors, attorneys, business executives and others offer their services. The modeling behavior many of these leaders provide is terribly important for many kids who don't have many positive modeling examples from which to draw. In my past experience as a principal, I can't remember a time a request was turned down--especially when the community leader knew s/he was going to be taking on a high-risk student. The pairing, logistics and so forth involved in this plan require considerable planning; the pay-off can be worth everything invested.

Without reservation, community volunteers can be exceedingly supportive.

•Art Projects for School Pride...A large school in an urban setting (in the State of Washington) was having major racial strife about 1970. Since this school had only about six percent white youngsters, the battles took place among various minority groups, e.g., Black, Chicano, Samoan-American, Chinese-American, Yakima Indian and so forth. The school authorities struggled for ways to get the different ethnic groups to pull together. There was no pride in the school.

Many staff members believed they faced overwhelming odds getting the various ethnicities to communicate with each other. An indirect tactic seemed promising. The staff decided to try a school pride project. Since the mascot of the school was the Bald Eagle, the project attempted was one having each cultural group design and draw a Bald Eagle so it represented the artistic style of the specific minority group. Each eagle was clearly different in style and appearance; the art was magnificent.

The principal has the eagles painted (by the students) on the walls in the main corridor (unheard of). Quite an

accomplishment.

The school used the eagles to make some very important points--points that stuck. For example, the picture illustrated a way to support a plan for school pride, yet the plan was supported in different but acceptable ways. The students understood this wisdom; tension reduced considerably over the next couple of years. Obviously the art project wasn't the only thing used to get a handle on the problems, but it was worthwhile in itself. It showed positive action could occur when people rallied around an agreed upon goal. Closure on the project gave the impetus to try other options.

'Imaginative Scheduling...Two schools with which I'm familiar have used imaginative scheduling approaches to help them with some of their more critical concerns.

A Pennsylvania site, twice during the year, has students attend school from 8:30 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. During these heavy work days regular classes are suspended. Students and staff engage in extended problem-solving activities by identifying things in school causing hardship; moreover they determine suitable action for resolving problems. When finished at 10:00 p.m., school is officially closed for the following day. (Interestingly, one visiting the school often finds students and staff at school on subsequent days following-up on needed action.)

A school in Japan was having a hard time gaining parent support for the regular activities of the school. Since the parents were involved with the Department of Defense, the parents were normally tied up in their jobs during the normal school hours, seemingly giving low-priority to the school and its activities.

This school decided to change the school week twice annually. On the special weeks students attended Thursday thru Monday (with time out for church services Sunday morning), rather than from Monday thru Friday. Because of the changed schedule, many parents were able to participate in weekend field trips, were able to offer services (like those at the computer center), were available to offer specific courses, and were able to gain a better feel for the school and its operation. When parents are supportive, the school usually has minimal disciplinary problems.

'Celebrate Learning...I've always felt we do too little to demonstrate our excitement over learning--learning is fun, not something distasteful (even though hard work at times may be involved). We need to find ways to celebrate learning; two suggestions come quickly to mind.

Start a picture taking campaign (especially photographing those students who receive few academic awards). Mount the pictures on the walls for people to see. These pictures will generate many comments. Accentuate the positive comments. Call attention to what is depicted in the picture; let everyone know it's legitimate to learn.

Another method for celebrating learning is to get each person in school to commit 30 minutes each week to study in the school library. If each person gives a brief period of time to the assignment, I'll bet students will quickly realize educators support through action the principles they espouse. Educators should model behavior expected from students. Appropriate educator behavior undoubtedly lends credibility both to the educator and to the mission of the schools. Strange, isn't it, how seldom one finds an educator (other than the librarian) taking advantage of the resources the library has available? People from a school near Houston tried the plan and were pleased with the results.

'Cafeteria and Playground Programs...The cafeteria and playground environments are probably the two most inhumane settings in our schools (with the exception, perhaps, of the school bus). A majority of school hassles often occur at these places. Even though both environments are a part of the school, the action there tends to follow the "out of sight, out of mind" principle. That is, because teachers and administrators often stay as far away from the cafeteria and the playground as possible, some of the motivation for good behavior does not seem to obtain--discipline problems raise their ugly heads.

Administrators, I believe, could help themselves, as well as students, if careful attention were given to "controlling" the cafeteria and playground. Care should be taken, for example, to make certain only the most appetizing food available is prepared. Art work can often change a rather sterile environment into a comfortable place to eat. Lines of serving, handling trays, and eliminating garbage should be thought through for efficiency and effectiveness. Students often must eat quickly making way for others. The overcrowding makes a trying situation worse.

Playgrounds should have spaces available for planned and unplanned activities; for individual, small group and team sports--with ample balls, bats and other necessary equipment. Too often these very obvious requisites aren't met.

In both spots there must be ample supervision. What goes on in these settings is too important for two or three people to handle, especially if teachers or aides are unknown to many of the children in the school (along with the level of their authority or lack of it). One school in Oakland found having actual cafeteria drills on expected behavior was very beneficial. (May sound like something some of us went through when in the military service; but there is a purpose for orderliness--and that purpose is learned.) It's well for us to remember, perhaps, some of our students probably come from homes where there may be few, if any, formal meals when the family sits together and learns from each other.

The cafeteria and the playground are exceedingly important as spheres for influencing acceptable student behavior.

PROCESS SUGGESTIONS

Process changes are more difficult to implement than logistical/material changes; process changes invariably involve people working together, making changes in previously established routines. Here are some process possibilities:

- 3 Before Me
- Stroke Notes
- Modified Attendance Procedures
- Complimentary Cards
- Human Service Opportunities
- Alternative Reporting System
- Competency Based Education
- Elimination of F's
- Sustained Silent Reading
- Restructured Counseling
- Rumor Committee
- One Positive Experience
- Concerns Box

. 3-Before Me...This process is often used at the elementary level, although it has been used effectively with older students. For implementation, the teacher helps youngsters learn to work with each other by having one student ask three other students questions before calling on the teacher. When helping others is legitimatized and supported by the teacher, and reinforced, students quickly understand cooperation is both expected and rewarded. Besides helping students learn to aid each other, the teacher also finds s/he is able to give greater personal attention to students who need help because less time is spent answering the same question over and over.

. Stroke Notes...This process is talked about in many schools, but the process too often remains at the verbal stage. A particularly effective plan is in operation at Truckee (California) Junior High School. Here the principal and vice-principal are expected to observe teachers periodically. The two leaders make the classroom visit serve two purposes.

In addition to providing helpful feedback to teachers they also use the opportunity to observe specific students who have discipline problems. When the administrators see their usually troublesome youngsters engaged in meaningful learning experiences, time is made and trouble is taken to write "stroke notes" home to parents letting the parents know what was observed.

I, by chance, was at the shopping center parking lot when a parent who received a stroke note pulled aside the vice-principal. The parent was elated, said it was the first time in eight years he had ever gotten a note from school that had something positive to say about his son. One wonders how many parents have never received a complimentary note. Stroke notes help, especially when written personally.

. Modified Attendance Procedures...Schools have an obligation to be concerned about attendance; A.D.A. is usually involved some way in formula computations needed to help schools obtain money from the state.

When a student is absent, the general procedure is to have someone from the attendance office find out whether the child is sick or truant. Rather than this formal and somewhat impersonal procedure, some schools have tried a different procedure.

The schools first identified the 5 to 12 percent of the absentees who were chronic "missers." Rather than have the attendance officer do the calling; they identified the school adult to whom the child related. The identified

adult was the one who made the call to the student. Improvement in attendance among those often absent children improved amazingly. Incidentally, the custodian in one school was the person responsible for calling two students--two students seemed to relate to him better than other adults on-campus.

. Complimentary Cards...There's a school in Tustin, California where the complimentary card has paid excellent dividends. Each student in school is given a set of complimentary cards (they look like a business card) which states, "You have just been served by (student's name), a student at _____ School."

When students perform a service in the community a card is given to the individual served. The school often receives letters from senior citizens and others who tell the principal how helpful the student has been. Often as not, the students are those not known for their academic prowess. Complimentary cards have been helpful to students, the school, the community. This is a process worth considering!

. Human Service Opportunities...Some youngsters feel positive about themselves when they have opportunities to be of human service to others. Opportunities for human service include things like: youth-tutoring-youth, a program to work with the deaf and blind, and/or a program one school calls Project "Amigo." Each of the following plans is implemented in one or more schools.

Youth-tutoring-youth projects usually operate in a way that older children learn to work with younger children. Often they aid in meeting the cafeteria and playground needs mentioned earlier. Older students, too, are often helpful in the classroom, acting as instructional aides. The students not only give assistance to teachers and children, but to themselves. When caring for others, people sometimes begin to see their own worth.

A school in the San Francisco Bay Area works on its human service program in conjunction with another school for deaf and blind children. Students from the two schools travel together to a nearby farm and interact with each other there. Here students with sight work with those less fortunate. Both groups of children benefit from the mutual exchange opportunity.

One of the most successful programs of this type I've seen is housed at Sonoma School in Modesto, California. In this school is a project called, affectionately, "Amigo." The school is one where handicapped children are mainstreamed into the regular program. Students without handicaps learn to work with other youngsters, assisting by helping to integrate the entire school population. There's one little girl with neither arms nor legs; the students, literally, help put her together each day. Arms and legs are attached to her young body. The care used by the Amigos is quite recognizable. The handicapped youngster isn't looked upon as a freak by students in the school--she's a youngster with special needs. Everyone lends a hand. The positive attitude carries over into many parts of the school. The Amigo program is a huge success; the feedback from students and parents alike is amazingly enthusiastic.

I'd like to underscore one point; not all students involved in the three projects mentioned above are limited to the students in schools who have learned how to contribute to the system. Children who seem to get the most out of the experiences are those who seldom find chances to be totally successful in other parts of the school program. Make note: The three programs re-

quire pre-planning, careful implementation, and frequent assessment. Programs can happen, they can be very successful, substantial preparation is required.

. Alternative Reporting Systems...Report cards are one of the most important aspects of a school program; issuing of report cards is a time when students and parents receive feedback on how a child is progressing. Too often, report cards aren't what they're cracked up to be; they just don't give information to those who need it most.

Many report cards allegedly offer information to parents through a series of letter grades, e.g., A, B, C, D, F or through another sort of numbering system, e.g., 1=Superior, 2=Satisfactory, 3=Unsatisfactory. Other reporting systems are also used. At best the preceding systems seem terribly general, vague, and definitely not consistent with personalized learning ideas educators talk about so much. According to some studies, many parents are calling for a return to the A, B, C differentials because this is what is understood. (May be what parents grew up with, but I'd bet a few pesos A, B, C isn't what they understand.)

Inevitably school clientele get into discussions about grades and grading--almost as inevitable is the creation of a committee to study the matter. Such as the case in a small school in Idaho about ten years ago. After much heated debate over which system was best, the superintendent in the district was able to help the committee consider an alternative question. First he asked, "What should a report card do?" The response was mixed and varied. General opinion held report cards should give students and parents personalized information about child progress toward some agreed upon expectations. Without charging into a long narrative, suffice it here to say the reporting system was broken down into two actions.

First, the committee agreed to accept specified goals for students. To implement this an early-in-the-year, three-way conference (parents, student, staff) was held. At the conference the teacher reviewed the student's past performance by analyzing data gathered in the cumulative folder. The student participated in planning the year's course of study, parents offered their ideas about expected outcomes. In this school, a school with a high level of interest in education, 95 percent of the parents participated in the pre-school conferences.

In addition to talking about objectives for the year, the conference was used to discuss and agree on the type of feedback (report cards) desired by the parents. The study committee had earlier selected five feedback options. The five options offered to parents and students included: grades, performance criteria, teacher-student-parent conference, standardized test scores, and a combination of the options. Interestingly, a large majority of parents initially chose the grade system; even more interesting, though, over a five year period of time (when people became aware of the power of other options) fewer than 12 percent of the parents chose grades for their reports. By-in-large movement toward performance criteria and the conference system prevailed. Some parents still asked for standardized tests; these were administered by the staff upon request (the test in this case was the Stanford Achievement Test). Apparently some parents felt this last option was important; they felt this would help them assess how their child was achieving in relationship to other children in the country.

A big selling job was required (a different sales pitch was applicable for the different groups). To go this route requires considerable, thoughtful,

professional pondering.

. Competency Based Education...The early-in-the-year conference works fairly well at the elementary level. The idea doesn't seem as effective at the junior and/or senior high school. Maybe this is because so many different teachers are involved and/or because it's impractical for counselors to see all the involved parents. (Actually, there are ways to overcome even the numbers problem; I'll mention how a school in Calgary, Canada has done just that.)

A valuable option is competency based education wherein students have defined objectives. When CBE is put together so parents and children have an option to pick and choose, there is a better possibility a student's progress will be tailored to personal needs.

In my opinion, giving the name of a course on a student sign-up sheet isn't explicit enough. "World History" isn't much of a description to help children and parents decide whether the course has something worth studying. In a given school, where there is more than one World History teacher, there's a good possibility what goes on in the separate classrooms is entirely different. Even though a written description doesn't communicate totally it's a start. Counselors can aid with further explanation when contacted about specifics.

A competency based program, done thoroughly, has specific competencies prepared for each course offering. Students know before they take a course the twenty to fifty things they ought to know when the class is completed. In places I've been, business education, industrial arts, and often home economics teachers are closest to activating true CBE plans. Typically, history and English departments are at the other end of the spectrum--although in recent years it seems English leaders are moving more in the direction of competency based programs. (Ventura High School in California is one good example of this and Clark Township High School in New York is another example.) Perhaps I'm overly skeptical about history department folks because I was a world history teacher early-on.

If schools move toward competency based models, perhaps education will move away from the "General Motors" assembly line system that seems to typify most secondary organizational patterns. In these schools students appear to be placed on an assembly line emerging at the end pretty much like all other folks. Some models are different because they take advantage of electives and do, therefore, have extra options stuck on the frame.

Rather than adopt the General Motors model, I'd rather think in terms of the supermarket or the buffet table at an excellent eating establishment. In these environments people can pick and choose from those things they believe are of particular benefit and/or appealing to them. As ideal as this is, I'm tempted (no, convinced) to modify the plan to make certain that students obtain at least minimal survival skill competencies and that they are then introduced to what I previously described as taste the spinach and mini-course options.

. Elimination of F's...Seems to me a student should really work hard at failing if s/he is to receive an "F" on a transcript.

Frankly, I'd like to eliminate "F's" in school because I don't think they have a useful purpose. Rather than using an "F," which connotes failure, I'd rather have educators put an "Incomplete" on the transcript. In my

opinion (and apparently the opinion of many students in schools where "F's" have been eliminated) the Incomplete essentially says to a student, "You are not a failure, you simply haven't done enough at this time to receive credit for the course." Doesn't take many instances for a student to be told s/he is a failure until the hypothesis becomes self-fulfilling. Failures look for attention--almost any way they can gain it. People who perceive themselves as failures are often our most difficult problem-children.

Frequently, when I talk with teachers and administrators about the no-F process, there is at least one person in the audience who rightfully points out life isn't free from failure and schools should reflect that realism. I'd offer two arguments against this interpretation. First, I often ask people in the audience to give a show of hand if they, at one time or another, have taken an Incomplete during their post-high school studies. Often as many as a third of the audience puts up a hand (occasionally the person asking about the real-life carry-over is one of the people thrusting a hand in the air). Is one reason people in the audience were at least mildly successful because they were given Incomplete rather than "F's"? I suggest this might be the case.

A second reason I believe we must eliminate "F's" is because there are enough opportunities in life to be a failure without contriving situations in schools to make failure imminent. Schools don't need to contribute to failure. Often failure is still possible in many ways nearly too subtle to be recognized, except to the individual child who finds him/herself in the punishing predicament. Failure for the sake of failure makes no sense at all to me!

One parting shot: The absence of failure doesn't necessarily produce success. Some people terribly accomplished in given areas consider themselves highly successful. Success is a very personal thing, something a little grade cannot convey. We may not be able to guarantee success, but we definitely have the tools to prevent ourselves from purposely emphasizing failure.

. Sustained Silent Reading...Earlier in this paper there was discussion regarding high levels of stress, an important part of our current society. Ways to keep stress within reasonable bounds are important for students to discover.

When I work with schools, I often talk with people about altered states of consciousness as one vehicle for learning to relax--to unwind. Frankly, it seems to me we focus on the lowest level of the brain in most schools, i.e., recall. There's enough research now to help us know there are higher plains of consciousness not focused on in schools, e.g., hypnotism, ESP, meditation. I believe we have a lot to learn from our Far Eastern friends when it comes to the mind and higher levels of meditation. Much of this is so foreign and so mystical to us we sometimes fail to give the idea much credence.

Although I usually recommend Transcendental Meditation to school people (to help with the unwinding requirements), there are very few schools that have support from the community for TM. There are, however, a few schools in New York and Ohio that have found TM a powerful tool.

If TM is too risky, I usually recommend time be put aside each day when students and teachers alike can either lie on the floor to practice "centering exercises" (a Yoga exercise) or simply to put their heads on the desk to rest--much the way most of us did when we were in school. When this latter approach is taken, it's fascinating to note the number of children who

actually fall asleep in a ten minute rest period. I'd offer this as evidence that young minds and bodies are tired. They keep going because they become hyper with all the competing stimuli found in most schools. Strange as it may seem, this isn't strong enough evidence for some educators--or else they believe resting isn't a productive experience.

If this is the case, I recommend sustained silent reading as an alternative. This is a process now practiced in many schools; it's effective if used in a single classroom, but much more effective when everyone in the school joins the program. To implement the plan, a given period of time is established when everyone in school puts aside all other activities and quietly reads. The coach reads, the principal reads, the children read--everyone. Each person decides on the reading material of his/her choice. Both the quiet and the concentration help people relax.

One school in Placer County, California, started the S.S.R. plan by putting aside 15 minutes each day for children to read. Over time, the reading period was extended from 15 to 25 minutes--because the results were so spectacular. Not only did children learn to relax, but reading scores rose appreciably. Materials normally idle on the shelves in the library gained increased use.

(Actually, the accurate title of the program should be mentioned--U.S.S.R. the acronym actually stands for "Uninterrupted, Sustained Silent Reading." Because of the potiental for obvious misinterpretation, I usually encourage people to use the acronym "S.S.R." rather than "U.S.S.R.")

The calming influence of the productive time can have a positive, soothing effect; many schools, indeed, are coming to view the process as important. There are numerous potential benefits--including the reduction of discipline problems caused by hyperactive students.

. Restructured Counseling...Most high schools are large; the opportunity for people to really know each other is at best difficult, at worst unlikely. An assignment of one counselor to each 400 students isn't going to reduce impersonalization.

The Bishop Carroll School in Calgary (Canada) has been able to reduce the impersonalization syndrome by implementing a modified counseling strategy. In effect, each adult in school is an advisor to a limited number of students--like ten. Each advisor (with rare exceptions) remains with the same small group of students from the time the youngsters enter the ninth grade until they graduate at the end of their senior year. Each day's schedule has time reserved when the group meets together to talk about what's happening in the school and how the services of the school can be brought to bear on the specific problems of the group members. The student success ratio in the school is exceptionally high.

The only way they were able to reduce the student population (about 1,200 youngsters) to a manageable arrangement where no adult had more than ten students was to use all available personnel in the advisor capacity. This meant all of the administrative staff, guidance and counseling personnel, coaches, band and choir leaders, librarian, instructional aides, etc., had groups of their own. By redeploying existing resources they were able to get down to a workable group-size.

The counselors had somewhat unique functions in this school. Rather than investing most of their time shuffling papers and counting credits, the

counselors acted as master teachers to the other teacher-advisors and, more importantly, they conducted special classes for students who seemed to need more guidance than others. Counselors were able to use their special training and expertise in a way that had maximum pay-off for students, the other teachers in the school and themselves.

As might be expected, the biggest drawback to the plan is with the special training needed by teacher-advisors. In Bishop Carroll, as with other secondary schools, many of the teachers demonstrated an excellent grasp of their subject-discipline, but that knowledge didn't prepare them to work with students as advisors. Considerable developmental plans went into the design and follow-up of an extended teacher-advisor in-service education program. Only when the staff development had been underway for a period of time (more than two years) did the creative efforts come close to gaining the rewards proposed by those who conceived the theoretical model.

Even today, educators at the school find it important to schedule bi-monthly meetings. During this time there is talk about students who aren't having their needs met or about certain operational procedures which need refinement. Through this critical-mass approach, they reaped good results--they were able to assist some students who had long records of misconduct and failure. Of particular significance, I believe, is the attitude among the staff that while students are integral members of a rather small body of people, each student "belongs" to the entire school educational community. When this attitude prevails, each member of the staff can help reinforce a particular strategy agreed on by the teacher-advisors. Discipline problems have been reduced significantly.

. Rumor Committee...A junior high school in Seattle has initiated a student, rumor committee. Rumors are found in nearly any social group setting. While rumors can be positive, they are often negative. In some strange way negative rumors have facility for fulfilling their hypothesis.

The student committee has a special task. It keeps alert to rumors regarding misunderstandings between individual students and/or groups of students. Sometimes the committee found, fights would break out in the school because of what one student supposedly had said about another student (the same situation obtained about groups of students). Battles often took place even when there was no substance to the rumor. Too frequently two students quickly found themselves in the middle of a ring of other students and the war was on--backing off was unacceptable when the peer pressure was applied.

The rumor committee had to learn how to cope with problems without gaining the titles of "finks," "meddlers," or in some more serious circumstances, "narcs." Working with the principal, the committee members learned how to meet with the people involved. The principal agreed that administrative involvement would occur only if called for by the rumor committee. This was a fairly high-risk adventure; the principal gambled and won.

Not all problems stemmed from rumors; some problems had to do with classified staff, school rules which seemed to be unfair, and teachers who weren't reasonably consistent in their treatment of children.

The student rumor committee met weekly with the principal to talk about concerns (often acting as spokespersons on problems expressed by other students). The principal agreed with at least some of the concerns expressed--and was able to do something decisive about them. Credibility for the procedure was

gained. Members of the school community began pulling together rather than in different directions.

Interestingly, the rumor committee was started by a group of students--it was not initiated by the administration. The concerned students didn't like what was happening between people and groups in their school. The students worked through some interesting times (and powerful learning experiences) as they labored over tough questions like: Who should be on the committee? How should decisions be made? What relationships should be established with the administration? What actions were open to them? How would they be looked on by other students in the school?

The students and the administration both worked through their anxieties. Today the school is a better place because people dared to trust each other.

. One Positive Experience...A school in Huntsville, Alabama, took on the philosophic principle of assuring each person in school at least one successful experience each day. Sounds easy, but try it!

To achieve their mission, they decided at the end of each day (school was over at 3:00 p.m.), they would set aside ten minutes when everyone in school, e.g., secretaries, students, custodians, etc., would write on an index card one successful experience they had had during the day. Students quickly found if they had a successful experience two or three days in a row, there was a good possibility the next day would also hold for them a positive happening. The hypothesis becomes self-fulfilling.

A couple of things resulted at the school worthy of note here. First, communication with the home improved. Rather than answering, "Nothing," when asked what happened at school today, students usually responded by telling parents about the thing they wrote on the index card. Students are the best communicators between the school and the home, and positive communication is certainly more acceptable than negative communication.

Second, the people in the school became cognizant of the very positive attitude nearly everyone in the school community had about the place. They certainly were put to the test in this regard.

Huntsville, about 15 years ago, was definitely not the bastion of Southern liberalism. The school of approximately 400 students was integrated against the wishes of some bigots in the greater community. Some of the righteous wandered into the school one day armed with pressurized paint cans. They squirted paint on some of the walls of the school, on some of the students, on some of the staff. To say the lease this was a rather demeaning and degrading act many had to suffer through.

The bigots hadn't counted on the positive attitudes among the people in the school. Even at the end of this day, filled with trauma, the people in the school still found positive experiences they reflected on their cards. The school board was very concerned about the matter--as well they should have been. In their efforts to be fair, they told all students and their parents it was possible to elect to return to the previous school, if the parents and the students wished to do so. It's my understanding one black family and one white family opted to transfer. In my opinion, that's pretty strong evidence what was happening in the school was valuable--and appreciated. With this appreciation came the intangible pride that gave the people purpose. Seems ten minutes per day isn't too much sacrifice to gain earned support. I can assure you the learning environment in that school was both productive and satisfying; discipline problems barely existed. Other schools might profit by starting such a plan.

. Concerns Box...Some educators have found a concerns box useful in knowing what is happening in the school. The box is located in a spot where students can place notes inconspicuously if they have a concern they believe need attention.

This option is available to students who otherwise probably will not talk with teachers and/or administrators about concerns. Often this access to people in authority helps to get at problems before they start. Although once in awhile there will probably be insincere notes submitted, an occasional weirdo can be tolerated.

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS

By far the most difficult actions to implement are actual curricular programs. Fascinating is a fact that nearly all programs in school are designed to help students deal with their external world. That is, there are courses for mathematics, home economice, physical education and so forth--but it is exceptionally hard to find programs which help the individual meet the internal struggles s/he faces. I believe the next educational frontier will be directed at inner space.

In this portion of the paper I'll call attention to a number of courses already available to help people with their inner space problems. For easier analysis the programs are presented under three headings, namely--programs for students, staff and parents. Possibly programs for staff and parents come somewhat as a surprise when they are considered in the light of disciplinary matters. I believe the reasoning for this will be obvious as the programs are discussed.

Curricular programs for students include:

- Values Clarification
- Transactional Analysis
- Confluent Education
- Self-Science
- Karate or Other Martial Arts

. Values Clarification...Some educators at the University of Massachusetts, among other places, have been working diligently over the past few years trying to put together non-fuzzy programs for many people called the "affective" part of the curriculum (as opposed to the cognitive).

Parenthetically, I'd agree the affect and cognitive domains cannot be separated; this is a discussion, however, which remains to be treated elsewhere. Certainly the strong interest in school courses at this time is highly cognitive oriented. Perhaps this over-emphasis on the cognitive aspects of education motivated Simons and his colleagues to pursue their investigations.

Affective education efforts have generally been given second-class citizenship in education circles because curricular substance has lacked academic rigor. Affective education has been non-plussed by many educators and lay persons alike because goals often seen vague and immeasurable. The more those who had a consciousness about affective education exclaimed the area was too important to evaluate--or that instruments were not available to evaluate the results--the more people claimed the "fuzzies" didn't know what they were talking about.

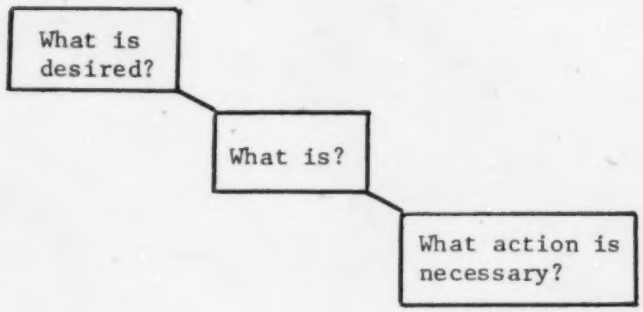
The "nonsense" charge did seem applicable for such things as "T" groups and sensitivity training. After the initial days of confrontation and placing back together of the participants, the lasting effects of the experiences were nil.

Simons, however, and others began to get a grasp not only on the importance of the interpersonal experiences, but they began to design ways to take the vagueness, mysticism, fuzziness out of the process. Some of the self-appointed gurus were affronted by the more scientific, precise approaches and strategies

used by Simons. Many people thought the School for Humanistic Education people at the University of Massachusetts were simply making hay in a lucrative market. I believe the historical results have proven the critics wrong.

Values clarification is an apt title to give activities in a planned program--for that is what people do, i.e., determine with greater clarity their own values. Students involved in high incidences of discipline problems frequently give evidence they don't know who they are, where they have been, where they are at any point in time, where they are headed in the future. Activities and experiences in a values clarification program can help rational people learn to know how they feel about values such as honesty, integrity, respect, trust, and so forth. Some students involved in values clarification classes often find the classes offer a first opportunity to talk about and to check out their values along with teachers and other peers.

Most values clarification classes have a discrepancy model to help students with their problems. This model is quite simple; it offers a cognitive picture for students to keep in mind as they ponder their specific responses. The model is represented below:



If and when one gets around to clarifying what one really values (and for some individuals this task is much easier than the same task for others), it's possible to consider one's behavior in light of desired values. If there's a good congruence between what is desired and what is, there's little need for further action--the individual is acting in a manner consistent with strongly held values. (By the way, when a person acts consistently with his/her values, this doesn't mean the results are necessarily beneficial to self or to society. For example, Charles Manson and many of his followers behaved consistently with the values they held to be of importance, but I'd criticize severely their contributions to society at large.) It's only, however, when people are cognizant of a discrepancy between what they believe and how they act can they begin to plot a new course of action.

If there is a criticism of the values clarification efforts, I'd say it has to do with not going far enough. That is, it's helpful to know there is a discrepancy between what is and what should be, but without help in knowing how to pull the two together, the job is only partially done. At least, theoretically, without help one may be in worse trouble than not knowing anything at all--sort of the "ignorance is bliss" concept. Educators, when considering values clarifications have some major responsibilities to study. Questions to think about, before a decision is made, include, at a minimum, the following:

- For whom should the course be offered?

- Are there personnel prepared to teach the program?
- Can help be offered to those who identify personal discrepancies?
- Do some students need more help then is available via the values clarification classes?
- How will parents and/or other members of the community be informed about the class?
- How are students graded?
- How is the program evaluated?

Believe me when I say the program will be evaluated--and often by those whom educators would least like doing the evaluating. The need to have a priori determined criteria for evaluation is imperative. Don't get caught with your assessment criteria down!

Values clarification has been effective for some students with behavior problems; it won't solve everyone's problem. Values clarification isn't a panacea any more than any other approach, but its worth having in the arsenal just in case it needs to be used.

. Transactional Analysis...As values clarification helps people review their values and their behaviors, transactional analysis is a program which helps people analyze why they do what they do. Values clarification is especially useful when people are rational. Unfortunately, not all people always act logically and/or rationally. There's a good possibility, indeed, that few of us respond logically and/or rationally in every situation where we find ourselves.

Transactional analysis, in short, helps individuals analyze--give reason to--their behaviors. Although perhaps somewhat overly simplistic, TA helps categorize behavior according to three useful stereotypes: parent, child, adult. As might be expected child behavior is characterized as non-consistent, disjointed, rambunctious. Clearly, children who have difficulties--disciplinary-wise--frequently find themselves predominately using their child behavior.

At the other end of the spectrum is parent behavior. This stereotype is characterized by a minimum of risk, super-carefulness, fear of heading away from accepted behaviors, perhaps an over-sensitivity to what other people think. Although people who are caught up in their parent behavior, in something resembling blind faith, aren't often involved in discipline cases, they often put undue pressure on others who do dare to be different.

A somewhat in-between position, but a position promoted by TA is the adult position. Adult behavior is characterized by reasonable, thought-out facts-considered-in-advance risk. Adults think through their behavior and the consequences before they act; this thinking process doesn't, necessarily, prohibit adults from doing some pretty nutty things. Hopefully they've at least thought through in advance what's likely to result.

Understandably, many young people who are in and out of mischief simply aren't in touch with reality--the here and now. Most every teacher has had a student in class who pestered someone else in the room when asked, "What are you doing?" responded by saying, "My mathematics," or some other ludicrous remark. There's good reason to believe the child actually wasn't aware of his/her own immediate actions. When working with young students on disciplinary matters, it's terribly important to get them in touch with the here and now--in touch with themselves, with what they are doing at any

given instant. Considerable involvement of time must be made to help some children know what they are doing, what's happening to them. Only after they are aware of their behavior, have some information about what type of behavior they are using, e.g., parent, child, adult, can they assess whether it's the behavior they want. If it isn't, then they can try new approaches--new behaviors. TA can help educators get at many underlying nuances that are apparent in most peoples' behaviors.

. Confluent Education...Those who believe in confluent education have pioneered their studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara; George Isaac Brown provided the leadership. The term "confluence" is usually used to identify the spot where two streams or rivers come together. When used in education, the term refers to the merging of two separate strands, i.e., the affective and the cognitive.

Basically, then, confluent education is a strategy for teaching cognitive information affectively. This may sound rather simple, but it's surprising --especially at the secondary level--how great the degree the transmission of information is the mode. The one-way communication technique is the most efficient (if not the most effective) way to get information from one person to another. Too, there are evidently still some teachers who believe if studies aren't distasteful and unpleasant--like good medicine (ugh!)--then learning can't possibly be very powerful. With these attitudes it's little wonder some students don't revolt, causing absolute chaos in some classrooms. Fortunately, many students have found other outlets for their feelings. They usually manage to cope.

Confluent education doesn't try to prepare educators to compete against movie actors or television performers in order to make learning enjoyable. Proponents certainly don't expect a live Sesame Street in the classroom. They just try to help teachers learn to present regular materials in a more exciting and fulfilling manner. Further, teachers are helped to prepare lesson plans which emphasize confluent education concepts.

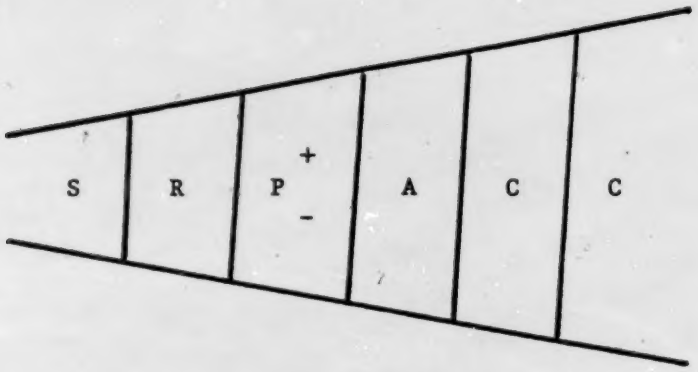
Confluent education is one program which now has some validated data on what can happen when appropriate strategies are used. Summarily, those working with confluent processes have data on four very basic issues:

- A curriculum to teach confluent strategies can be designed.
- Most (but apparently not all) teachers can learn to use the strategies.
- Some teachers--once they know the strategies--practice their new skills in the classroom.
- A significant number of children in confluent education classrooms benefit from experiences there.

I wish we had equivalent data on other curricular offerings and teachings strategies we insist on using in schools.

. Self-Science...This is a course where the scientific approach is used to study the self. Stone and Dillehunt have researched and translated the theory of self-science into some 68 lessons. The curriculum is used principally at the upper elementary and junior high school levels. Self-science gives students a cognitive process to analyze and act on their emotions.

Simplistically illustrated, self-science uses what is called a "Trumpet" analogy. The phases of the Trumpet students give names (vocabulary) to their problem-solving strategies. This illustration depicts the process.



The simple diagram reflects how people go about solving problems; further the conceptualization is used as a tool to help students gain reality on things occurring they otherwise might not understand.

The "S" stands for stimulus. Everyday, every moment, there are stimuli bearing down on people--and those stimuli have affect on behaviors. In fact, we aren't aware of some stimuli unless we've been trained to look for them, trained to be alert to their influence on our lives. The "R" stands for response. In some way, either overtly or covertly, we respond to stimuli. Undoubtedly some stimuli evoke more of a response than others. Some stimuli are like red flags waved in our faces. Resultant behavior reflects those stimuli. Also people frequently learn to put aside, or ignore--at least in the outward sense--some obvious stimuli. A response in this case is to do nothing about the stimuli; to control outward actions. There's really no value judgment placed on this type of response, just happens. Teachers often use this kind of controlled response when they ignore, intuitively it seems, things they've either overheard or seen. Nonetheless, everyone responds to stimuli.

The "P" stands for patterns. Note, too, the "+" and "-" in this phase. Some patterns are positive and some negative. When a person responds in a predictable manner to a stimulus then s/he has a pattern Skinnerians call a conditioned response. All patterns serve in some way. This is a particularly difficult concept for children to understand. That is, even though patterns may cause people to be punished in one way or another the pattern still serves. In order to change patterns, ways must be found to provide greater rewards than are currently available. This isn't always easy. In some cases it may be impossible. Perhaps this explains why some negative behaviors are so difficult to re-orient. Sometimes re-orientation comes from within. Usually, however, some outside help is needed; administrators, teachers, counselors can be helpful here when they have the trust students learn to accept and anticipate.

As indicated, the "+" illustrates those patterns typically associated with acceptable behavior; the converse is true for "-" patterns.

If changes in behavior are to occur, the person must have alternatives; alternatives are represented by the "A" in the diagram. If an individual has

learned to evoke a given pattern in a given situation, and if the pattern serves the person in some way, the rewarded behavior is likely to continue--with a further engraving of the behavior. The person must learn new behaviors, or at least that other responses are available. Not all alternatives will be as acceptable as the one normally exhibited; some about the same, and some more acceptable. And that's where the "C" comes in.

The first "C" has to do with choices. After alternatives are presented, the individual must determine among the options those which will serve best. This takes some thoughtful analysis. At lease theoretically, the greater the number of alternatives open to a person the more likely viable (acceptable) alternatives will be possible to choose from.

Naturally all choices have consequences. If good choices are made (the second "C" in the model) chances are the consequences will be worthwhile; if bad choices are made, the consequences will likely have the opposite outcome. (This concept is essentially the same as that covered in transactional analysis (adult), i.e., people may go ahead and make poor choices (they continue to exhibit unacceptable behavior)). Should this be the case they need to be well aware of the consequences before they decide to act.

I'm especially biased toward Self-Science because I've been fortunate in watching it evolve from field-testing into a refreshing and powerful approach. I've had first-hand experience watching as those who facilitated as teachers helped student after student learn about his/her behavior and, moreover helped students accept a personal challenge for improvement. One example: in one classic situation a young girl was having terrific difficulty getting along at home with her younger sister, had similar discipline problems with other peers in her class. One day she admitted writing four-letter words on the walls in the restroom. Frankly, the young girl was a major pain where most people sit.

Clearly something was causing the turmoil, but no one seemed to be able to unlock the mystery. The release came one day during a Self-Science session. For some reason the class was discussing divorce and how some of the students saw only one of their parents on various occasions. The young girl listened for awhile and then started crying uncontrollably. In a private session with one of the teachers, she related the cause of her unacceptable behavior.

She had learned her parents were going to be divorced and she was concerned about her future. Somewhere she had picked up the erroneous information that when parents are divorced children are put up for adoption.

Not being familiar with other alternatives to help her with her troubled emotions she found herself continuing to act out, getting herself into more and more difficulty. If Self-Science can make a difference by helping students like this young lady solve their problems, the program is worth all the time, energy and talent put into its development.

Goodyear Publishers, a subsidiary of Prentice-Hall, is supposed to have the curriculum available for purchase by the summer of 1977.

. Karate or Other Martial Arts...May seem strange to include Karate and/or the other martial arts in a discussion about ways to reduce discipline problems. On the contrary, Karate may be one of the most sensible approaches available for some youngsters.

There are times when people need to be able to defend themselves--there's enough crime, including rape and assult, on the streets, and in the media, to underscore this point. The unsuspecting and the unprepared are the ones most often assaulted.

Does there seem to be an inconsistency here? That is, up to this point every effort has been made to generate ideas which can help reduce violence, vandalism, etc. Here it may appear I'm advocating violence and active combat. While the incongruence may obtain at first glance, the truth is, the martial arts are solely for self-defense purposes. Those who study and learn the martial arts, as they are practiced seriously, know that self-discipline (coming from an inner quiet--sometimes called "wa" by the Japanese) is the first thing mastered. Respect for the other person--as well as for self--is one of the cardinal principles reinforced at the very outset.

Study and training in the martial arts combines to give the individual more control over personal emotions, and understanding of where the other person is coming from, confidence in alternatives other than striking out in a blind rage, body tone from practice, and a more enlightened philosophical outlook on the occurrences of the day. Moreover, if pushed to the point where one must defend, the person is ready to cope with the inevitable. Confidence and self-discipline are good requisites to have under the belt when the going gets tough.

There are at least two constraints which mitigate against implementing martial arts programs in schools. Unfortunately, the public has been conditioned to think about the martial arts in terms of Kung-Fu movies or the Karate chop which leaves another person prostrate. There is a lot more to Karate than the glamorized chop. The constraint of locating an able and effective teacher may be more difficult to circumvent than that of changing public opinion about the overly sensationalized aspects of the martial arts. There are many ways to bring martial arts leaders into the school to teach; locating them in the first place is the biggest problem.

If I had my druthers, I'd make Karate or one of the other martial arts an elective available in each school, giving those who would like to enroll, that opportunity. And, I'd begin the program with children very early in their school years.

Clearly, other programs (specific curricular offerings) could be expanded upon in this section. Enough has been mentioned, however, to give those interested the option to find more information, indeed to obtain additional written materials and human resources.

Educator Programs

In a way, all of the preceding are programs for teachers and administrators as well as for students. If educators don't understand the theory and rationale behind specific programs, if they don't,further, learn associated skills and teaching strategies to implement programs, not very much will come from all the good intentions in the world. Staff development, as a planned program for educators, is a necessity--although it is frequently ignored. Staff development can aid in launching the preceding programs. In addition to those programs mentioned for students, the following--designed specifically for educators--may also be worthwhile in reducing or alleviating disciplinary problems.

. Teacher Effectiveness Training

. Altered States of Consciousness
. Cultural Awareness

Teacher Effectiveness Training...Gordon and others have provided leadership in TET. (Most educators these days are familiar with the program--or know some people who have taken the training.) TET has made significant impact in many states, including Arizona, California, and Washington.

Although some people who support TET would argue otherwise, I'd say the basic ingredients of TET emphasize sound communication principles, e.g., how to send messages, how to receive messages, how to provide appropriate feedback. During this entire process teacher learn ways to reduce "noise" which gets in the way of good communication.

As far as sending messages is concerned, the learner gains a grasp of many sound principles. Sending "I" statements (rather than "we" or "they" statements) is essential for effective communication. Perhaps even more important is the ability to avoid sending mixed messages--usually done by saying one thing, but at the same time giving body messages clearly different from the verbalization. Teachers who have high incidences of unacceptable student behavior in the classroom, I bet, frequently transmit mixed messages.

Listening has certain skills. These, too, can be practiced and learned. Has always been strange to me that we spend so much time in our lives hearing but we spend so little time really learning to listen to what is being said. Make no mistake, what is heard may not be the same as what is said--and what is understood may, at times, be considerable different than either of the other two. Questioning techniques, for clarification purposes, and paraphrasing are valuable tools. Paraphrasing is used to put the ideas of other people into one's own language, to help check out the accuracy of what was heard. The need for listening skills is obvious--if for no other reason than the fact people spend so much time doing just that. Listening requires self-discipline, a good quality to have when working with children who have disciplinary problems.

Providing accurate feedback is as important as sending an accurate message. As mixed messages can be sent (causing noise and confusion) so, too, can mixed feedback be sent causing trouble. Administrators and teachers need to practice sending feedback to see if others are receiving what they are offering. By the way, feedback may be verbal or non-verbal. Body language is a very important part of the feedback sequence.

TET can be very valuable for those who need it. (Incidentally, I'd be remiss if I didn't emphasize the point: The people who need help most are typically the people who resist most.)

Altered States of Consciousness...An earlier section of the paper gave ideas about some altered states of consciousness, i.e., meditation, so I won't elaborate on that further at this juncture. Suffice it here to say, too few educators know much about altered states of consciousness and the influence altered states can have on peoples' behaviors.

I believe each school seriously concerned about discipline problems should have a small, study team composed of three to five people that take the responsibility for being alert to ways altered states of consciousness can be used, positively. For instance, biofeedback can be a very powerful approach. Rather than discussing the idea further here, I'll stop...hoping someone's

appetite has been whetted sufficiently to look into the matter for further definition--and, perhaps, action.

Cultural Awareness...Any teacher or administrator who works with a group of youngsters with a different cultural orientation, in my opinion, has a personal and professional responsibility to learn more about that culture. Moreover, in my opinion, educators have a responsibility to help students learn about the educator's culture. I'm familiar with many schools that make exceptional efforts to help people learn about minority cultures, e.g., black, Chicano, Asian-American, Native-American, etc. But I don't know of a single school district where there is a matching effort to help minority cultures learn about the stereotyped, white, middle-class. There are as many myths about this group as there are about minorities--and only when we begin looking at each other in terms of individual strengths and weaknesses, as opposed to looking at each other in terms of stereotyped, hyphenated Americans will we make much progress.

When minority youngsters believe Anglos are no good, out to get 'em, there's no way fear will be reduced. The trust level will remain low. Likewise, if Anglos are frightened about minority groups and believe it's impossible to put faith in them when the pressure is on, trust will not be enhanced. Undoubtedly there are enough "losers" in any culture to support many of the negative stereotypes that have emerged. Because there are some who meet the stereotype criteria, however, doesn't mean everyone with the same skin color fulfills the false prophecy. We live in a pluralistic society. That pluralism needs to be protected if our democracy is to continue as the finest form of government conceived. Democracy requires responsibility--and one of the responsible actions educators can pursue is that of learning to understand others and helping others understand them. The challenge requires undoing beliefs that may have been learned over many family generations. It's a challenge worth winning.

Parenthetically, nearly everything in the preceding paragraphs is applicable if all terms reflecting cultural awareness were removed and the principles of Title IX inserted. This, too, is a two-way street, a street which in the past has been pock-marked with discrimination. The elimination of discrimination against one group doesn't justify discrimination for another. Thinking people, of whatever sex, need to pull together to eliminate discrimination.

PARENTING AND PARENT EDUCATION

If I had to pick a single area where I believe schools are doing an inadequate job, I'd say the two-fold voids of parent education and parenting top the list. I'm not advocating, indeed, that everyone ought to be a parent; I'm simply advocating that all people ought to have more information than is usually available to help in their decision-making.

Off-hand, I can't think of a tougher job than that of being a parent--being a parent is more all-consuming than being a superintendent of a school district, the president of a large organization, a secretary in an organization. Most of us have known the trials and tribulations--and the infinite pleasures and reasons for being proud--and have, by trail and error, done the best we've known how. But is the trial and error method sufficient? I think not!

Schools and educators can institute programs for parenting and parent education. A distinction is made between the terms because I believe they denote somewhat different foci: Parent education begins quite early with children and it can be a part of the regular curriculum program. Certainly it can and should reach beyond what is covered in most family-life programs.

Parenting is a continuing education study that can be a legitimate part of adult education studies. Permit me to expand on these two distinctions further. I'll cover three programs briefly:

- Early Infancy Programs
- Parent Education Programs
- Big Brother/Big Sister Programs

Unless it isn't clear already, let me mention here the reason I believe programs in this area are so important. I make the assumption that if the world of the parents and the child at home is filled with happiness, caring, trust the probability of that child demonstrating those same characteristics at school is very much enhanced. There are exceptions to the rule, but the vast majority of children--when one reviews some of the serious shortcomings of the homes from which they come--survive better than we have any realistic reason to expect. It's really incredible what some humans can endure, and still be successful--productive and happy. Anything schools can do to assist in the struggle should gain thoughtful attention.

Early Infancy Programs...Two models for school-sponsored, early infancy programs seem tenable. The first is the program sponsored at the school in which six-month old children and others up to the age of five are involved. In this model, older students in the high school work in the program with teachers and parents. The classes for the early-aged youngsters are organized in such a way that part of the time is devoted to the actual teaching-learning action. Directly with children.

The program can be comprehensive in nature; that is, medical and dental needs of children can be covered in the course as well as the play-part of the program. Part of choosing to be involved in the program includes assuming responsibilities for the "other" necessities.

A second model gaining considerable attention is the home, day care program. In this model, children (usually from three to five years of age) are placed in special homes especially prepared to meet the comprehensive needs of

children. This model is much-preferred by some educators and parents because it comes closer to representing a family situation rather than many institutional models. High school students, unfortunately, often have difficult logistical problems to work through when the actual program is housed away from the school--unless the home centers are located very near the school.

In either example, the model should give young adults opportunities to prepare food for the children, to rest with the students, to change diapers and bathe the youngsters, to worry with the adults when children are sick or nagging, and to provide, with some reasonable protections, the same experiences when they assume their chosen responsibilities.

Parent Education Programs...These programs may be either formal or informal; in either case the local school can assume the leadership for getting programs started. Many hospitals in communities have helped prospective parents gain information and education about pre-natal care and about certain actions required once the mother delivers the child. Too often, though, this is too little information; the unknown is just beginning. At the time when questions need answering, there aren't many around, especially for low-income people.

Those with fiscal resources can visit the family pediatrician frequently to gain help with child growth and development matters; moreover, these same people are able to get regular check-ups for their children. Quick diagnosis of physical or emotional problems can be given--and, usually, effective action initiated. Not so with low-income people. Burton White, working in Brookline (Massachusetts) schools, has found even the simplest of physical problems often go undetected and unattended because adequate medical facilities aren't available to those without funds. In my opinion, no child in our society need ever go without food or appropriate medical attention; our nation has too much. (I'm against a welfare state for those who can take care of themselves. Very young children don't meet that criterion.)

Rap sessions are held in some schools where parents can get together to talk with each other about things they discover with their children. Among other things, parents learn they aren't alone with their questions. The rap sessions, however, need qualified people to help answer serious questions (this person isn't, necessarily, a school official). Medical people with a sense of community responsibility are often invaluable for the services they perform. More formalized study courses can also be devised. These courses can focus on a variety of concerns, varying from what to do about trantrums to discussions about relationships with other siblings in the family. Piaget's research can serve as content for many formal study programs.

Another option, practiced at the Riverside County Office of Education in California, is a resource and referral service. This service is available on a seven-day week, 24-hour/day basis. Parents needing help can call the hot-line and get assistance. Working mothers through the service can locate places to put their children during regular work hours. Special medical and dental assistance be found, even safe, temporary places to put children when the parent is on the verge of physical and mental exhaustion. Probably the most onerous problem facing the resource and referral service is that of getting parents to ask for help before the parent-child world comes unglued. Even this problem is a matter of parent education.

Big Brother/Big Sister Programs...Many of us at one time or another have experienced the anxiety-producing phenomenon of being lonely in a crowd. When visiting a nation where the culture is different or when being alone in a big city, one is often aware of all the other people around. At the same time one frequently feels helpless both in terms of communicating and in terms of mutual caring. Unfortunately, many children are lonely--even in their own homes. These are the neglected children mentioned earlier. And neglect isn't restricted to a particular socio-economic background.

Evidence of loneliness is the long waiting-list of children searching for big brothers/big sisters. These children need a friend.

Schools can help establish big brother/big sister programs if they really want to. Older boys and girls can take younger children to football games, on field trips, to the park for play on the swings, or to simply be with the child to read stories and/or talk. In my opinion, there are many less important things done in schools that the big brother/big sister program can be substituted to replace. The program mentioned has benefits for everyone--the child, older students, parent. One can easily brainstorm these benefits. Why don't we do it? Is it because we haven't rethought our priorities? Perhaps!

IN SUMMARY

What I've tried to do in this Operations Notebook is to help administrators look seriously at one of our biggest school problems--discipline. Moreover, I've tried to focus on those factors which seem to cause unacceptable behavior. This was done by calling attention to at least some of the causes that come from the home as well as some of the causes promulgated by schools. When the two sets of causes are inclusive, there's little recourse for students except to act out. The fuse for some children, obviously, is much shorter than for others.

Finally, with more focus on prevention rather than remediation, I've offered 40 positive, preventative prescriptions to help keep discipline matters from becoming so overwhelming that productivity and satisfaction is nearly impossible. The prescriptions have been categorized under these umbrella concepts, e.g., logistics/materials, processes, programs. I've tried to caution interested educators to avoid trying to implement too many programs that inevitably become unmanageable.

We can do something about discipline; the time to begin is now!